

# SIMON RAY

INDIAN & ISLAMIC WORKS OF ART











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INDIAN & ISLAMIC WORKS OF ART

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TO  
30 NOVEMBER 2018

10AM TO 6PM  
MONDAY TO FRIDAY





## A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

It is with great pleasure that I present this eighteenth catalogue of Simon Ray Indian & Islamic Works of Art.

I would like to thank the many scholars and experts who have so kindly and generously helped us prepare this catalogue: Jerry Losty, Robert Skelton, John Seyller, Will Kwiatkowski, Ellen Smart, Catherine Glynn, Andrew Topsfield, Helen Philon, George Michell and Robert Alderman.

I would like to thank the following for their expertise in the installation and display of the works of art: Helen Loveday, Louise Macann, Colin Bowles, Tim Blake and Keith Mitchell.

Leng Tan has written the entries for this catalogue. I would like to thank Leng for his lyrical writing, which conveys the pleasures and enjoyment of each work of art and the excitement of discovery, bringing them to life for the reader.

William Edwards has written the ceramic entries with zeal and meticulous research. I would also like to thank William for looking after the catalogue production at every stage.

Finally, I would like to thank Richard Valencia for his excellent photography; Richard Harris for his outstanding repro and colour preparation and his scanning of the paintings; and Peter Keenan for his fresh and elegant catalogue design that presents so beautifully these works of art.

Simon Ray





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## ARDASHIR RECOGNISES HIS SON SHAPUR IN THE POLO GAME

IRAN (SHIRAZ), CIRCA 1560

FOLIO:  
HEIGHT: 42.5 CM  
WIDTH: 26.5 CM

MINIATURE:  
HEIGHT: 31 CM  
WIDTH: 19.5 CM

Opaque watercolour heightened with gold and silver on paper.

An illustration from a *Shahnama* of Firdausi.

The text of the *Shahnama* is written in black ink on cream paper, in four columns of fine *nasta'liq*, with interlinear and intercolumnar illumination framed by narrow gold bands, dark blue, red and orange lines, and fine black rules. On the illustrated page, the text is written in uncoloured clouds reserved against a gold ground decorated with polychrome flower-heads and scrolls. The columns are separated by vertical blue bands with trefoil flowers on sinuous tendrils.

On the *verso* are twenty-five lines of text in four columns, with intercolumnar bands in blue and gold decorated with floral scrolls. The margins of the illustrated page are illuminated in gold with wild and mythical animals, trees, flowers and leaves. A pair of *simurgh* flies in the sky of the upper border.

This painting is from a copy of Firdausi's *Shahnama* that represents the very height of the Shiraz tradition of manuscript illustration. The illustration is remarkable for its highly detailed treatment of the architecture and formal garden, use of brilliant colour, magnificent gold decorative borders and above all the charm of its subject. The painting depicts the scene from the *Shahnama* in which Ardashir asks the identity of a youth, impressed by his prowess on the polo field. It turns out that as he suspects, quite correctly, the youth is his son Shapur, born in secret, hidden away from Ardashir and now seven years old.<sup>1</sup>

Ardashir, the founder of the Sasanian dynasty, has defeated the last Parthian sovereign Ardawan for the throne and marries his daughter. At the instigation of her two brothers living in exile in India, Ardawan's daughter tries to poison Ardashir. Her eldest

brother Bahman sends an envoy in the night with a package of precious poison, which the princess mixes in a goblet of water with sugar and wheat meal as a drink for Ardashir when he returns from the hunt.

As Ardashir raises the poisoned liquor to his lips, the cup slips from his hand and smashes to pieces on the ground. His wife's trembling agitation arouses his suspicions and he asks for four domestic hens to be brought in. The hens peck up the wheat meal from the floor and immediately fall dead when they consume the poisoned cereal.

With her plan uncovered, Ardashir hands his wife over to his vizier for immediate execution. However, she pleads for her life, revealing that she is carrying Ardashir's child, and asks to be spared at least until the birth of her child. Reasoning to himself that Ardashir has no son to his name, the vizier decides to conceal her in the palace, looking after her until her son Shapur is born. The minister and the wife bring up the boy in secret for seven years. The splendid boy seems every inch the royal child.

One day Ardashir laments to the vizier that he has no heir to the throne. The vizier decides that now is the time to reveal the truth and after obtaining the king's promise to spare his life, tells him the details of Shapur's birth, including a painful operation he has performed on himself at the time to ensure that he has physical proof that the boy is not his, but the son of Ardashir and Ardawan's daughter. He has cut off his own testicles, preserved them in salt and sealed them in a box, which he has handed over to the treasury. The box has been dated so there can be no argument about when the operation was performed.















Ardashir is delighted to find out that his son is alive and arranges a polo game in which a hundred boys of Shapur's age take part. The polo match takes place at dawn the next day and all the boys strive to outdo the others. They all ride and play brilliantly but when the ball flies close to the king, only one child dares to sweep forward on his horse and strike the ball away from his father towards the other waiting, more hesitant boys. Ardashir recognises his son by the skill and boldness of his polo playing, embraces him and leaves him to be brought up as a prince. Ardashir builds the city of Jundi Shapur in his name, richly rewards the vizier, and is reconciled with his wife. After his ascension to the throne, Shapur reigns for over thirty years before his peaceful death from natural causes.

This folio comes from a copy of Firdausi's *Shahnama* that is one of the grandest and most accomplished of Shiraz illustrated manuscripts in the later sixteenth century. Ten illustrated leaves from this important *Shahnama*, including half the frontispiece, are in the Norma Jean Calderwood Collection at the Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, Massachusetts. The Calderwood *Shahnama* pages are discussed by Marianna Shreve Simpson in Mary McWilliams (ed.), *In Harmony: The Norma Jean Calderwood Collection of Islamic Art*, 2013, pp. 77-113, 236-241, cat. nos. 94-101.

Six pages are in the Los Angeles County Museum. Other leaves are in the Museum Rietberg in Zurich, the British Museum in London, the Asian Civilisations Museum in Singapore, the David Collection in Copenhagen, the National Museum of Korea in Seoul and the Yale University Art Gallery.

#### Provenance:

Spink and Son, London  
Private Japanese Collection  
Private Swiss Collection

#### Reference:

1. The story of Ardashir and Shapur given here is compiled from B. W. Robinson, *The Persian Book of Kings: An Epitome of The Shahnama of Firdawsi*, 2002, p. 93; and the new Penguin Classics translation by Dick Davis (trans.), *Shahnameh: The Persian Book of Kings*, 2007, pp. 554-560.

#### Literature:

Abolqasem Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh: The Persian Book of Kings*, (trans.) Dick Davis, 2007.  
B. W. Robinson, *Persian Paintings in the India Office Library*, 1976.  
B. W. Robinson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Persian Paintings in the Bodleian Library*, 1958.  
B. W. Robinson, *The Persian Book of Kings: An Epitome of The Shahnama of Firdawsi*, 2002.  
J. V. S. Wilkinson, *The Shah-Nama of Firdausi, with 24 Illustrations from a fifteenth century manuscript formerly in the Imperial Library, Delhi and now in the possession of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1931.



## HUMAYUN PRACTISING ARCHERY AT KANDAHAR

INDIA (MUGHAL), 1595-1600

BY MISKIN AND DHANRAJ

FOLIO:

HEIGHT: 36 CM

WIDTH: 24 CM

MINIATURE:

HEIGHT: 33.5 CM

WIDTH: 20.5 CM

Opaque watercolour heightened with gold on paper.

A folio from the "Third" *Akbarnama* manuscript.

Mounted on an album page most probably dating to the eighteenth century.

Inscribed to the lower margin in *nasta'liq*:

"Designed (sketch) by M[i]skin, coloured by Dhanra[j]"

Also inscribed in the lower margin:

"His Majesty whose abode is in paradise [Humayun] aiming at a *qabaq* (target) in Kandahar after the capture of Kandahar"

The note written in black ink in the sky gives us the: "New number 64".

Inscribed within the text panel in *naskh* is the subject:

"On this joyful day, which was made the test day for horsemen and dextrous archers, the royal cavalier of the plain of fortune and nursling of the spring of glory, to wit, His Majesty the Shahinshah felt disposed to

engage for a time in shooting at the *qabaq* and to show his archer's skill to the generality and thus to lead them on the way of devotion.

The first time he aimed at the *qabaq* - which experienced marksmen had failed to hit - his arrow struck the ligature of the golden ball. At this all the people shouted. Such a thing appeared wonderful to the superficial [but what marvel was therein it to those who have beheld with awakened eyes the real spectacle of the mysteries of the lord of the world]."<sup>1</sup>

The *Akbarnama* of Abu'l Fazl is the biography of the Mughal emperor Akbar and an imperial chronicle of his reign (1556-1605) and that of his father Humayun (1530-1540; 1555-1556). According to Jerry Losty, Mirza 'Askari surrendered Kandahar to Humayun on 3rd September 1545, but subsequent intrigues resulted in Humayun's having to retake the city later that year from the Persians, when he gave it over to his old friend Bairam Khan. Humayun returned to Kandahar in 1555, having heard rumours of Bairam Khan's

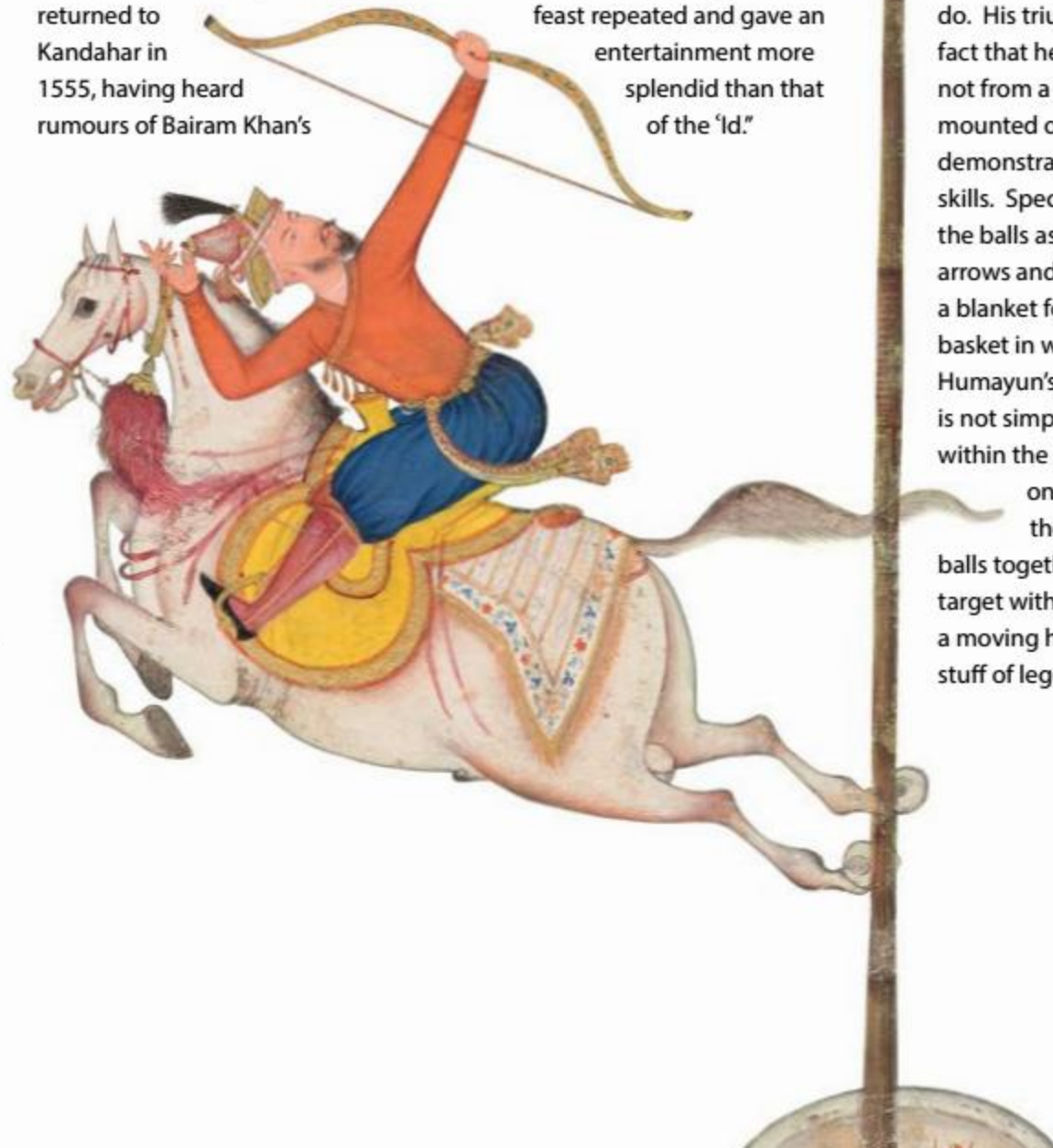
treachery, but in fact these were baseless and he confirmed Bairam Khan in his governorship.

Losty notes that the eighteenth century *nasta'liq* inscription in the lower margin is slightly misleading, since the archery contest actually took place in Kabul, not Kandahar. Just before he set out for the conquest of Hindustan in November 1554, Humayun gave a great feast in Kabul for the 'Id festival, but Bairam Khan did not arrive from Kandahar until the following day, whereupon Humayun, out of loyalty to his old friend, repeated the festivities. The sentence from the *Akbarnama* just preceding what is written in *naskh* in the original sixteenth century text panel confirms this fact:

"Bairam Khan arrived on the day following the feast of Ramzan. His Majesty, for the sake of giving greater pleasure and out of the affection he bore him, had the feast repeated and gave an entertainment more splendid than that of the 'Id."

The great Mughal artist Miskin has here designed a tremendously exciting page with the action set within an enclosure outside the walls of Kabul. Humayun and two companions gallop round the target suspended from a high pole in the palaestra, to the accompaniment of cheers from the assembled spectators. The target is a ring fastened to the top of the pole serving as a mark for archers and the pole is tethered by ropes and anchored to a heavy marble base. The artist's handling of the twisted pose of the three archers is masterly.

Humayun is distinguished from the other two contestants by the magnificence of his white steed and his golden bow ornamented with jewelled flowers. He wears the distinctive turban with a tall pointed cap that he designed himself. At his very first attempt Humayun has shot his arrow through the ligature holding together the ring of golden balls, a feat which the inscription tells us experienced archers have failed to do. His triumph is increased by the fact that he has reached the target not from a standing position but mounted on a rapidly moving horse, demonstrating his mastery of cavalry skills. Spectators reach out to catch the balls as they are loosened by the arrows and a man rushes up with a blanket forming an impromptu basket in which a fallen ball nestles. Humayun's impressive achievement is not simply to shoot through space within the ring of balls, or through one of the balls, but to cut the thin string holding the balls together and thus dismantle the target with a single arrow shot from a moving horse. Indeed, this is the stuff of legend.







و درین روز بجهت افروز کعبه عیار جلیل سواران مادر و پسران و زنان و بچه ها و کتک میزدند آن شهر سوار میدان اقبال نو بهارستان چاه و بیکال  
یعنی حضرت شاهنشاهی را بنیل آن شد که زمانی از نشاط آباد خود را بقیق الما حق مشغول و او ندو و تیز دستی و تیر اندازی خود را بر ظاهر میان  
هوید ساخته صورت پرستان عالم جمافی را بشاه راه عقیدت خوانند و بعد از اول قیوم را که کاروانان تحریر کار و درون آن عاجز بودند نشانی  
بر نوچه ساخته عقد کوی نهرین را بحدنک موسکان درختند از وقوع این امر غریب و از حاضران مادرگاه عزت برآمدن لایق امور دیده طاهرین بیخ



موقع اندازی حضرت جنت انبیا فی بعد از فتح قندهار در قندهار

کین عمل دهنه





ک سواران باد پیا و تیر اندازان موی شکاف می گرفتند آن شهر سوار میدان اقبال نو نهال بهارستان جاه و جلال  
 که زمانی از نشاط آباد خود را بقیق انداختن مشغول دارند و تیز دستی و تیر اندازی خود را بر ظاهر بینان  
 جسمانی را بشاه راه عقیدت خوانند دفعه اول قیق را که کاروانان تجربه کار در زدن آن عاجز بودند نشانه  
 دنگ موشکاف دوختند از وقوع این امر غریب از حاضران بادگاه عزت برآمدنشان این مورد در دیده ظاهر بینان بدید





Musicians play drums, trumpets and cymbals, while a *behishti* or water carrier brings a skin of water in to allay what must surely have been an inordinate amount of dust. The water vessel (*mashk*) is made out of an animal skin still covered in fur. The legs of the animal are fastened by loops to a strap around the *behishti*'s shoulder, while the water is emitted from the long neck of the animal with the head chopped off. Another *behishti* sprinkles water at the bottom of the painting to settle the dust.

Miskin was one of the master artists of the Akbari period who had a major hand in most of the historic manuscripts of the reign. He was the son of Mahesh, one of the early masters named in Abu'l Fazl's account of painting in the imperial studio, and brother of the lesser known artist Asi. His earliest ascribed work is found in the manuscripts of the 1580s: the *Darabnama* at the British Library, London, and the Jaipur *Razmnama* and *Ramayana* as well as the Patna *Timurnama*. He played a major role in the Victoria and Albert Museum's "first" *Akbarnama* and their *Baburnama*, and then in all the major poetical manuscripts of the 1590s, culminating in the "second" *Akbarnama* of 1602-1603.

Losty notes Miskin's ability to vary the expression of his figures and to create compositions of immense excitement and energy. The premature blowing up of the mines at the siege of Chitor and the building of the fort at Agra are two of his greatest works. These are illustrated in Susan Stronge, *Painting for the Mughal Emperor: The Art of the Book 1560-1660*, 2002, p. 72, pl. 47, and p. 83, pl. 53. The present painting is equally among his most exciting works. The hills behind have assumed Miskin's characteristic top heavy shapes, but are here seen faintly through aerial perspective. Whereas Miskin, if left to himself,

might have coloured them heavily, as in his unassisted work in the 1595 *Baharistan* at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, illustrated in Jeremiah P. Losty, *The Art of the Book in India*, 1982, pl. XXIV (left), p. 90, no. 64, here the outlines have just been filled with green by Dhanraj.

Dhanraj was an individual but not very prolific painter. He is known from a few works in imperial manuscripts from the 1580s into the early Jahangir period.<sup>2</sup> He contributed three paintings to the circa 1590 *Baburnama* at the British Library, including the splendid page showing Babur approaching the fort at Gwalior, published in J. P. Losty, *Indian Paintings in the British Library*, 1986, no. 13, and he was the designer of one painting in the 1595 *Khamasa* of Nizami at the British Library. He contributed an interesting page to the "second" *Akbarnama* of 1602-1603 illustrating the young Akbar receiving his mother in 1557 after her journey from Kabul.

This page is one of more than twenty miniatures that have recently come to light from an important royal manuscript thought to have belonged to Akbar's mother, Hamida Banu Begam. Scholars who have studied these paintings, in particular Linda York Leach, have identified the manuscript as a third royal *Akbarnama*.

The earliest *Akbarnama* manuscript is primarily in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, which has 116 miniatures. This first *Akbarnama* was painted around 1590-1595 and presented to the emperor as his close friend Abu'l Fazl was still working on the text. The second copy of the *Akbarnama* is divided between the British Library, which owns 39

illustrations, and the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, which has 66 paintings. This second *Akbarnama* is quite different in style from the first manuscript, more refined and less dynamic, with many of the pages lightly tinted rather than highly coloured like that of Akbar's own copy. It was produced between 1602 and 1603, probably to commemorate the tragic assassination of Abu'l Fazl in 1602.

According to Leach in her study, "Pages from an *Akbarnama*", in Rosemary Crill, Susan Stronge and Andrew Topsfield (eds.), *Arts of Mughal India: Studies in Honour of Robert Skelton*, 2004, pp. 42-55, the newly discovered third *Akbarnama* pages are related to the Victoria and Albert Museum's highly coloured, dynamic illustrations and were probably painted just after Akbar's own series, between 1595 and 1600.

Leach convincingly suggests several reasons for identifying the royal family member for whom this *Akbarnama* was commissioned as Hamida Banu Begam. Firstly, the text is written in the conservative *naskh* script as opposed to the *nasta'liq* used on the other two copies. *Naskh* is a script that Hamida is thought to have preferred. From her personal library is a *naskh* manuscript with her ownership seal, penned for her just before her death. Secondly, a number of scenes centre on women and their activities, depicting them with unusual animation and intimacy, and showing scenes from the *zenana* that would have appealed to Hamida. These include "Humayun surprising his parents", illustrated by Leach on p. 42, fig. 1 and discussed on p. 47.

Finally, several paintings such as the present depict her husband Humayun in the context of much greater warmth, tenderness and drama than his portrayals

in the other *Akbarnamas*. One of the finest, combining all these aspects, is "Festivities at the Wedding of the Emperor Humayun and Hamida Banu Begam" now in the Cynthia Hazen Polsky Collection in New York. This is illustrated by Leach on pp. 44-45, figs. 2, 3 and 4; and also by Losty in Andrew Topsfield (ed.), *In the Realm of Gods and Kings: Arts of India*, 2004, pp. 372-373, cat. no. 165.

The surviving pages were removed from the manuscript they were in and pasted into a new album in the eighteenth century. Nothing survives from the reverse of the original folios, but inscriptions identifying the subjects and sometimes the artists were added in *nasta'liq* on the album pages. The number written in black *nasta'liq* on the present painting refers to a new sequence in the album. Leach refers to a few surviving numbers in red in the lower left corner, which seem to be the painting numbers in the original manuscript. Where some of the original text survives, as here, it is in the form of panels within the paintings. The text panels are very rare. Most of the folios have large uninterrupted paintings allowing the artists to compose freely unhindered by the need to accommodate the text.

#### Provenance:

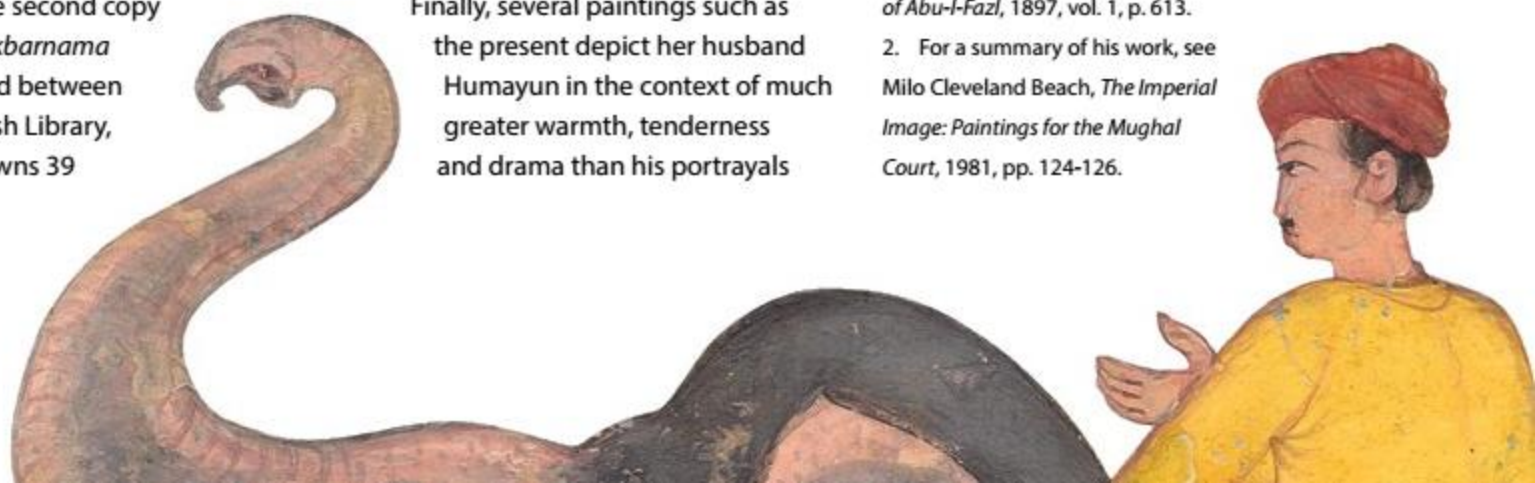
From a private collection that has been in England since the 1940s.

#### Acknowledgement:

We would like to thank Jerry Losty for his expert advice and kind preparation of the material used in this catalogue description, and Will Kwiatkowski for his reading of the inscriptions.

#### References:

1. H. Beveridge (trans.), *The Akbar Nama of Abu'l-Fazl*, 1897, vol. 1, p. 613.
2. For a summary of his work, see Milo Cleveland Beach, *The Imperial Image: Paintings for the Mughal Court*, 1981, pp. 124-126.





















## AKBAR'S ARMY IN PURSUIT OF 'ALI QULI KHAN

INDIA (MUGHAL), 1595-1600

ATTRIBUTED TO THE ARTISTS  
DHANU AND KHEM KARANFOLIO:  
HEIGHT: 36.1 CM  
WIDTH: 24 CMMINIATURE:  
HEIGHT: 34.3 CM  
WIDTH: 20.7 CMOpaque watercolour heightened  
with gold on paper.A folio from the "Third" *Akbarnama*  
manuscript.Mounted on an album page most  
probably dating to the eighteenth  
century.Inscribed in *nasta'liq* on the  
right margin:"The Imperial army in pursuit of  
'Ali Quli Khan".

Inscribed in black on the verso:

"New number 51".

The *Akbarnama* of Abu'l Fazl is the  
biography of the Mughal emperor  
Akbar and an imperial chronicle of  
his reign (1556-1605) and that of  
his father Humayun (1530-1540;  
1555-1556).With the text on the reverse of this  
painting now removed, the subject  
of this lively battle scene from the  
so-called "third" *Akbarnama* can be  
identified only by a fragmentary  
caption in the right margin that tells  
us that this painting depicts the  
imperial army in pursuit of 'Ali Quli  
Khan and his forces.'Ali Quli Shaibani, leader of the Uzbek  
nobles, held fiefs in the east and the  
Governorship of Jaunpur. He had  
served as an officer under Humayun  
and was already one of eight Mughal  
commanders when Akbar became  
emperor at the age of thirteen.  
According to Linda York Leach, who  
publishes another painting from this  
*Akbarnama* depicting Akbar's forces  
in pursuit of 'Ali Quli Khan over the  
River Ganges in her article, "Pages  
from an *Akbarnama*", in Rosemary  
Crill, Susan Stronge and Andrew  
Topsfield (eds.), *Arts of Mughal  
India: Studies in Honour of  
Robert Skelton*, 2004, pp. 52-53,  
a personal quarrelwith the boy emperor created an  
implacable hatred in the wily 'Ali  
Quli, who at first thought that Akbar  
would be easy to overthrow. Akbar  
had difficulties because so many of  
his officers were one time comrades  
with the rebel.'Ali Quli initially fought effectively  
for Akbar and was granted the title  
of Khan Zaman in 1556, the year  
of Akbar's ascension to the throne.  
However, he became increasingly  
seditious, and notwithstanding the  
emperor's forgiveness of his many  
transgressions, became a thorn in  
Akbar's side and proclaimed open  
rebellion in 1565. Akbar decided  
to take matters into his own hands  
but his struggle with 'Ali Quli Khan  
was extremely challenging and  
complex in terms of military strategy.  
A concerted campaign against the  
rebel, as illustrated by the present  
painting and by the painting  
published by Leach, continued for  
eight long years between 1559 and  
1567. Akbar finally dealt with him  
and his equally rebellious brother  
Bahadur Khan at the Battle of  
Sakrawal opposite Kara in the  
Ganges in June 1567. Both brothers  
were killed.Due to the length of the campaign  
against 'Ali Quli Khan and the paucity  
of inscriptions on the many paintings  
that illustrate various battles, it is  
often difficult to establish precisely  
which battle is taking place, or its  
location, or the date of the event.For example, Leach suggests that  
the painting she illustrates on p. 52,  
fig. 8 of her article, "The supply train  
crosses the bridge of boats on the  
Ganges", depicts an incident from  
late in the eight years of Akbar's  
continuous pursuit of 'Ali Quli Khan  
and she dates the incident to 1567.  
Though no doubt as she argues, the  
Ganges was crossed and re-crossed  
many times during the lengthy  
pursuit, we cannot agree with her





شکر پادشاهی در قتل و خوار شدن







dating of 1567 as her painting has an original red number of 158 that survives to show its place in the original manuscript. The paintings of the third *Akbarnama* were remounted in an album in the eighteenth century when a new sequence was numbered in black on the reverse. In the present painting, we have the "new number 51".

We do not consider it possible to jump from a story about Humayun watching a game of polo in Tabriz numbered 156 in red, to an Akbar story numbered 158 in red if that takes place in the eleventh year of his reign as she suggests. We think the 'Ali Quli Khan pursuit over the Ganges more likely takes place much earlier in his reign, in 1559 or 1560 just a couple of years after the last illustrated story about his father.

The backdrop to the battle in the present painting is a fortified city with high impenetrable walls constructed of red sandstone and tall faceted towers crowned with white marble domes. Jerry Losty has proposed that this city may refer to a rebellion of 1565 when 'Ali Quli Khan was pursued by the imperial forces to Hajipur and Rohtas.

As another possibility, John Seyller has suggested an episode recounted in the *Akbarnama*, vol. II, pp. 394-395. On 1st February 1566, the emperor himself led an expedition against 'Ali Quli and his allies, driving them from Ghazpur fortress in eastern Uttar Pradesh and forcing them to make a hasty crossing of the Sarwar river, where their abandoned belongings were seized. The rebel soon repented, and the emperor forgave him once more, but the wretch resumed his ignominious ways and met his end within a year in 1567.

This painting has no ascription, which was probably lost when the lower border was trimmed. Nonetheless, a number of stylistic features have suggested to John Seyller that the painting may be a collaborative work by Dhanu and Khem Karan, two senior imperial artists. Dhanu was active between 1577 and

1599 and worked on most of the manuscripts produced during the 1590s. According to Seyller, Dhanu's facial types are in this painting less conspicuously idiosyncratic than usual, but are evident in the warriors with such quirky features as puffed-out cheeks, knobby chins, and pinched expressions. A similar range of faces is found in his solo paintings in the 1597-1599 *Baburnama* and the circa 1598 *Layla u Manjun* at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, illustrated in Andrew Topsfield, *Paintings from Mughal India*, 2008, pp. 24-25, no. 8, and the circa 1595 volumes of the first *Akbarnama*. The heavily modelled ibexes and gazelles are reminiscent of the same creatures in another painting from the *Layla u Majun*, and of the jackals in the aforementioned *Baburnama* painting.

Other minor details noted by Seyller - the form of the standards festooned with yak tails, the occasional painterly tree, and the tiger skin-patterned caparisons - further corroborate the attribution. One of the most distinctive details appears in the fortress, where the four flanking towers are rendered with pronounced shading on either side of the central face. This treatment of a common architectural feature is found only in Dhanu's work. The zigzagging walls, the substantial boxy rooftop structures and the small, simple domes are also consistent with Dhanu's style.

The faces of two prominent but unidentifiable nobles - the horseman in silver and gold armour gesturing toward the fortress, and another in a blue tunic trimmed in gold - fall outside the scope of Dhanu's work. They are portraits or special faces, and are attributed by Seyller to Khem Karan, who is named in this subordinate role in two other paintings in this manuscript that are ascribed to Dhanu. These faces compare most closely to Khem Karan's portrait of Babur in two 1597-1599 *Baburnama* illustrations. Both artists are capable of these large rock formations, though this element was probably assigned to Dhanu. Recession into space is

suggested by the different colour of each layer of rocks.

The wide variety of costumes fashioned from a mixture of sumptuous fabrics and different animal skins including tiger, leopard and possibly shark leather, make for engaging and delectable viewing as the army charges across the page from left to right in a slight upward incline. Akbar's forces meet little resistance from the few men of 'Ali Quli Khan who try to stem their advancing tide. The steady upward trajectory of the imperial forces, and their determined expressions and stances, suggest at once the intractable nature of their task while hinting at imminent victory.

This page is one of more than twenty miniatures that have recently come to light from an important royal manuscript thought to have belonged to Akbar's mother, Hamida Banu Begam. Scholars who have studied these paintings, in particular Linda York Leach, have identified the manuscript as a third royal *Akbarnama*.

The earliest *Akbarnama* manuscript is primarily in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, which has 116 miniatures. This first *Akbarnama* was painted around 1590-1595 and presented to the emperor as Abu'l Fazl was still working on the text. The Victoria and Albert Museum paintings deal with the middle years of Akbar's reign (1560-1577). Though dateable to 1590-1595, the paintings are still in the style of the 1580s, full of vigour and excitement.

The second illustrated copy of the *Akbarnama*, commissioned early in the next century with the text brought up to date, is divided between the British Library in London, which owns 39 illustrations, and the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, which has 66 paintings. This second *Akbarnama* is quite different in style from the first manuscript, more

refined and less dynamic, with many of the pages lightly tinted rather than highly coloured like that of Akbar's own copy. It was produced between 1602 and 1603, probably to commemorate the tragic assassination of Abu'l Fazl in 1602. Amongst the paintings is a dated miniature containing the *Ilahi* date of the 47th year of Akbar's reign, corresponding to 1602-1603. The dating of the second *Akbarnama* is discussed in J. P. Losty and Malini Roy, *Mughal India: Art, Culture and Empire*, 2012, p. 58.

According to Leach in her study, "Pages from an *Akbarnama*", in Rosemary Crill, Susan Stronge and Andrew Topsfield (eds.), *Arts of Mughal India: Studies in Honour of Robert Skelton*, 2004, pp. 42-55, the newly discovered third *Akbarnama* pages are related to the Victoria and Albert Museum's highly coloured, dynamic illustrations and were probably painted after Akbar's own series, between 1595 and 1600. Stylistically, this manuscript is closer to the first *Akbarnama* than the later one. Leach convincingly suggests several reasons for identifying the royal family member for whom this *Akbarnama* was commissioned as Hamida Banu Begam, Akbar's mother.

#### Provenance:

From a private collection that has been in England since the 1940s.

#### Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank John Seyller and Jerry Losty for their expert advice and kind preparation of the notes we have used for this catalogue entry. We also thank Seyller for his attributions to Dhanu and Khem Karan.





















## AKBAR ENTHRONED

INDIA (MUGHAL), 1595-1600

FOLIO:

HEIGHT: 37 CM

WIDTH: 22 CM

MINIATURE:

HEIGHT: 32.5 CM

WIDTH: 19 CM

Opaque watercolour heightened with gold on paper.

A folio from the "Third" *Akbarnama* manuscript.

Mounted on an album page most probably dating to the eighteenth century.

Numbered in red to the lower left corner of the album page with the original painting number "160".

The emperor Akbar is seated on a magnificent throne on a hexagonal dais. He receives a young boy who is being presented to him by a courtier who has his hand on the boy's shoulder as he approaches the dais. Four other boys stand in pairs to the front of the throne. Courtiers stand in attendance while a chancellor with pen and ink records the gifts that are being presented at court, which include musical instruments and two deer. Outside the palace walls are three large elephants that form part of the entourage.

Though the painting does not have any inscriptions giving the scene, we believe that its subject is the presentation of the four year old 'Abd al-Rahim Khankhanan ("Lord of Lords"), in later life the

commander-in-chief of the Mughal armies for both Akbar and Jahangir, at court in 1561 following the assassination of his father, Bairam Khan, in the same year. Bairam Khan was Akbar's leading but rebellious general, regent and mentor.

The presentation of 'Abd al-Rahim is the only incident in the *Akbarnama* text in which a young boy is directly presented to Akbar at court and brought before the emperor's throne. While young boys are illustrated in some other paintings in the three *Akbarnama* manuscripts, they invariably stand to one side, the sons of Rajput nobles or Mughal courtiers who accompany their fathers to court.

The earliest *Akbarnama* manuscript is primarily in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, which has 116 miniatures. This first *Akbarnama* was painted around 1590-1595 and presented to the emperor as his close friend Abu'l Fazl was still working on the text. In this first *Akbarnama* is a painting of "Akbar greeting Rajput rulers and other nobles at court, probably in 1577", by Miskin and Sarwan, with portraits by Madhav. This is published in Susan Stronge, *Painting for the Mughal Emperor: The Art of the Book 1560-1660*, 2002, p. 40, pl. 25. Here it is a Rajput ruler that bows before the throne, while his two young sons wait by the side.

As part of the story given in the *Akbarnama* text, or visualised as an *Akbarnama* illustration, the direct presentation of the boy 'Abd al-Rahim Khankhanan is the most convincing interpretation of the subject of the present painting.

In the first *Akbarnama* at the Victoria and Albert Museum, there is a painting of this subject painted by Anant, published by Stronge on p. 13, pl. 2 of her book. The child is similarly helped onto the dais by a man who has been tentatively identified as Ataga Khan, who may also be the man presenting

the boy in our painting. The Victoria and Albert Museum painting does not include the four other boys, which in our painting may represent young companions, the sons of eminent courtiers, chosen to accompany the boy in his education at court.

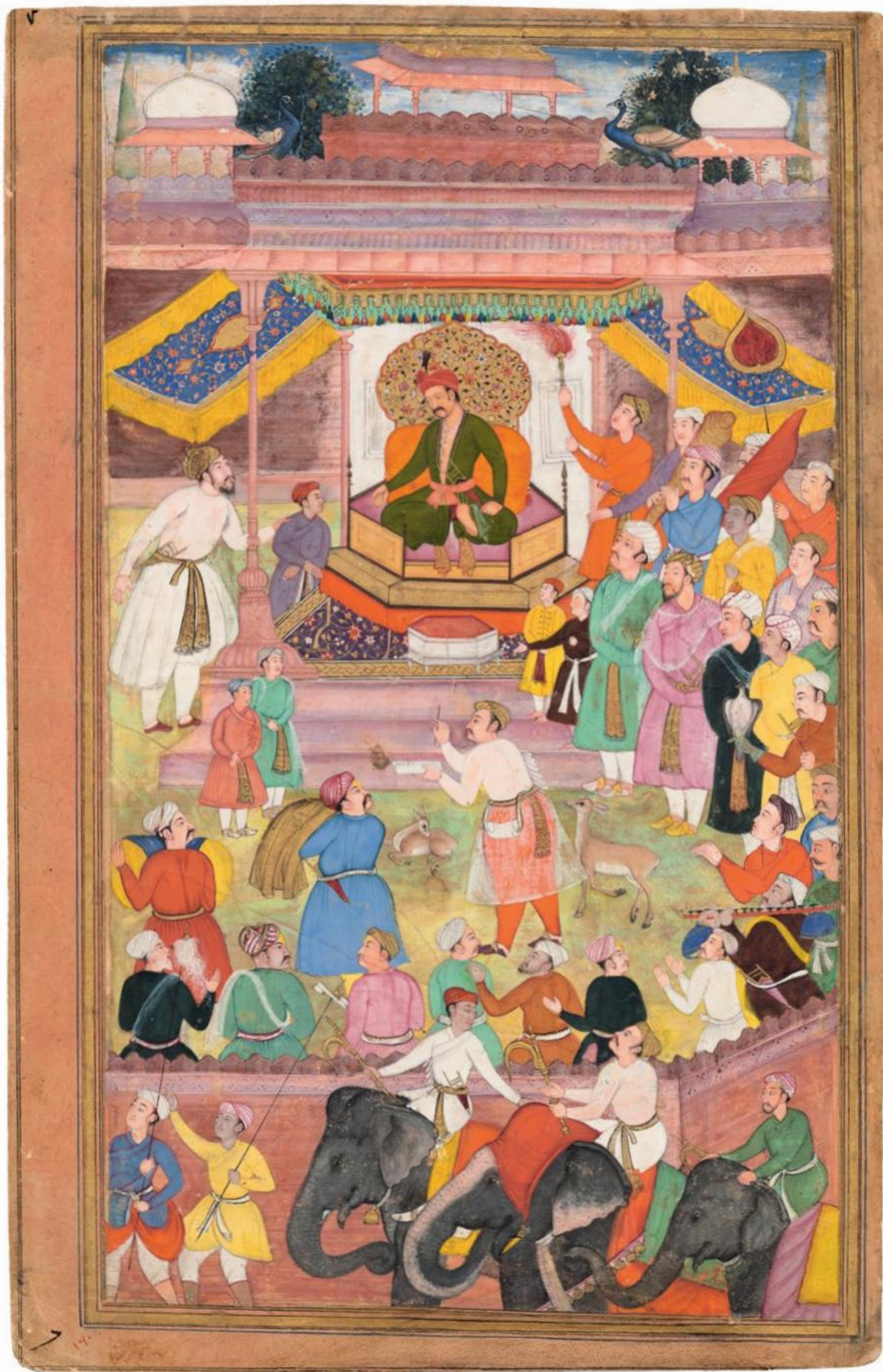
The Victoria and Albert Museum scene shows a leopard as a gift rather than the two deer, but in both cases, these are visual embellishments by the artist not described by the text at all. The *Akbarnama* text is more concerned with the narration of events, the psychological motivation of characters, in particular the wisdom and magnanimity of Akbar, and the intricate manoeuvrings of political intrigue, especially by treacherous rebels. The text never describes court scenes in detail, so in all *Akbarnama* illustrations the detailed visualised scenes of court life, as well as landscapes, hunts and battle scenes are derived from the artists' imaginations. The Victoria and Albert Museum also has a first *Akbarnama* painting in which the subject that precedes this scene is illustrated, that of the young 'Abd al-Rahim travelling with his widowed mother towards Akbar's court. This is published by Stronge on p. 61, pl. 40.

The incident of the presentation of 'Abd al-Rahim to Akbar at his throne is given on pp. 203-204 of the Beveridge translation of the *Akbarnama*:

"The horror of the murder [of Bairam Khan] produced great affliction among the people of the deceased. Muhammad Amin Diwana, Babal Zambur and Khwaja Mulk brought away 'Abdu-r-rahim, Bairam Khan's heir, who was then four years old, from the scene of the catastrophe along with his mother and some servants, and went off to Ahmadabad. A crowd of Afghan wretches quickly followed them, and the unfortunate sufferers had to fight the whole of their way through to Ahmadabad. They stayed there for four months, and then Muhammad Amin Diwana and some servants took the proper course and set off for the mankind protecting court, taking with them













'Abdu-r-rahim. Before they had kissed the threshold, news of Bairam Khan's death had reached H. M. the Shahinshah, and a gracious order was issued for the attendance of 'Abdu-r-rahim. This order reached Jalor at the time of friendlessness and orphanage and was healing for broken hopes. The purport of the order was that he should come to Court and be reared by the Shahinshah.

"Several true men such as Babal Zambur, Yagdar Husain, brought that new fruit of loyalty ['Abdu-r-rahim] to Agra in the middle of the sixth divine year, corresponding to the beginning of 969, September 1561, and submitted him to the testing eye of H. M., and exalted him by presentation on the threshold [of the throne]. H. M. the Shahinshah, in spite of evil-speakers and evil-thinkers received the child of lustrous forehead, in the lines of whose brow there were the notes of nobleness and truth, and reared him in the shadow of his own supervision. In a short time he was distinguished by the title of Mirza Khan. Day by day his good manners and nobility of nature revealed themselves, and he attained to lofty eminence. He was raised to the very highest rank, that of Khan-Khanan. An account of this will be given in its proper place."<sup>1</sup>

This page is one of more than twenty miniatures that have recently come to light from an important royal manuscript thought to have belonged to Akbar's mother, Hamida Banu Begam. Scholars who have studied these paintings, in particular Linda York Leach, have identified the manuscript as a third royal *Akbarnama*. According to Leach in her study, "Pages from an *Akbarnama*", in Rosemary Crill, Susan Stronge and Andrew Topsfield (eds.), *Arts of Mughal India: Studies in Honour of Robert Skelton*, 2004, pp. 42-55, the newly discovered third *Akbarnama* pages are related to the Victoria and Albert Museum's highly coloured, dynamic illustrations and were probably painted after Akbar's own series, between 1595 and

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The second copy of the *Akbarnama* is divided between the British Library, which owns 39 illustrations, and the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, which has 66 paintings. It was produced between 1602 and 1603.

According to Jerry Losty, the surviving pages of the third *Akbarnama* were removed from the manuscript volume they were in and pasted into an album in the eighteenth century. Nothing survives from the reverse of the original folios, but inscriptions identifying the subjects and sometimes the artists' names were added below on the new album pages. Numbers written in black refer to a new sequence in the eighteenth century album.

Leach refers to a few surviving numbers in red in the lower left corner of the obverse which seem to be the painting numbers in the original manuscript. The red number 160 on the painting therefore refers to its original sequence, which fits in well with a story from the early years of Akbar's reign. We know from the subject of painting 156, which depicts "Humayun visiting the city of

Tabriz and watching a game of polo" that a painting only four numbers before ours still deals with the reign of Humayun. An incident early from Akbar's reign of the supply train "Crossing the water over the bridge made of boats and the royal army pursuing 'Ali Quli Khan" is inscribed with an original red number 158.<sup>2</sup>

#### Provenance:

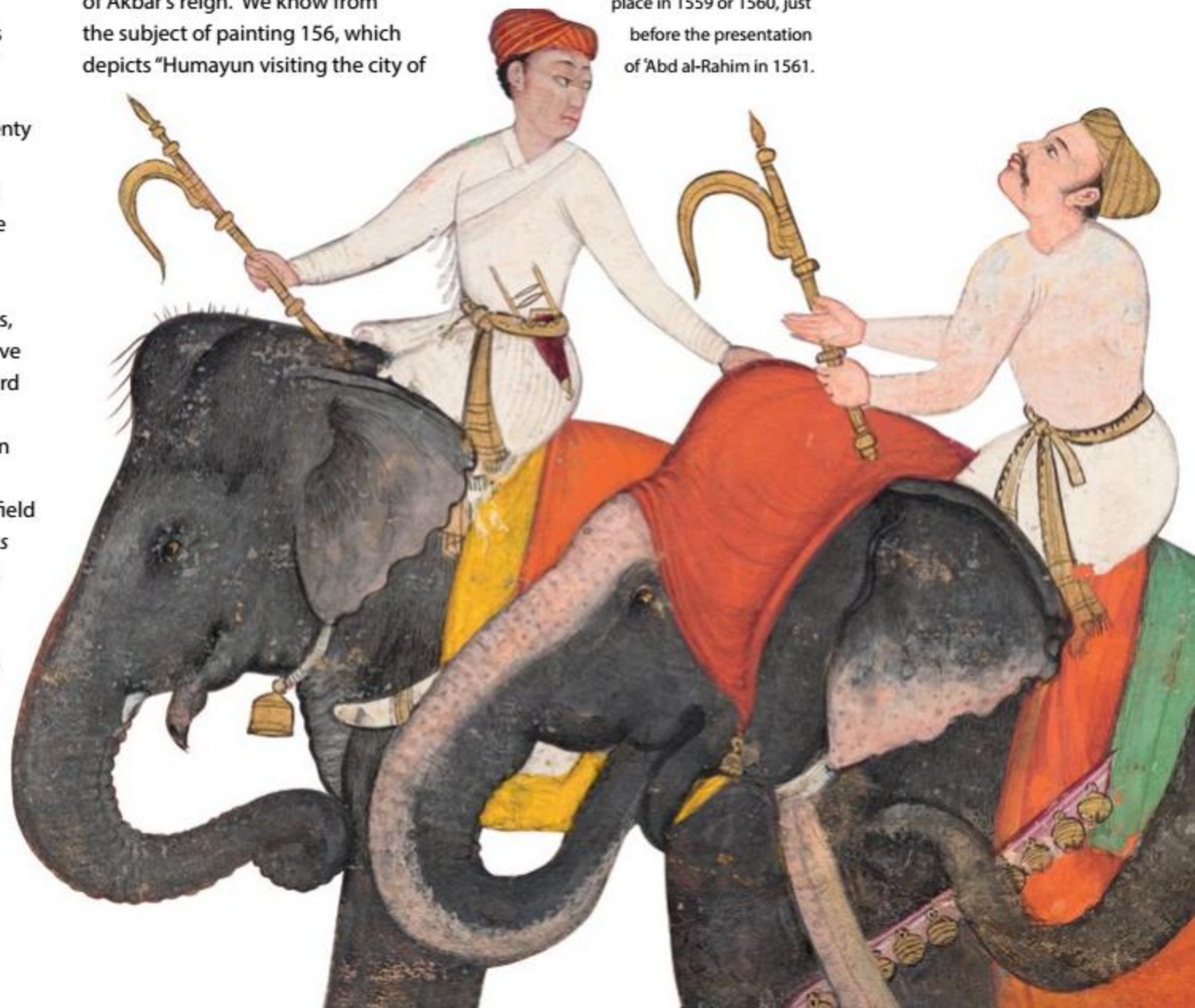
From a private collection that has been in England since the 1940s.

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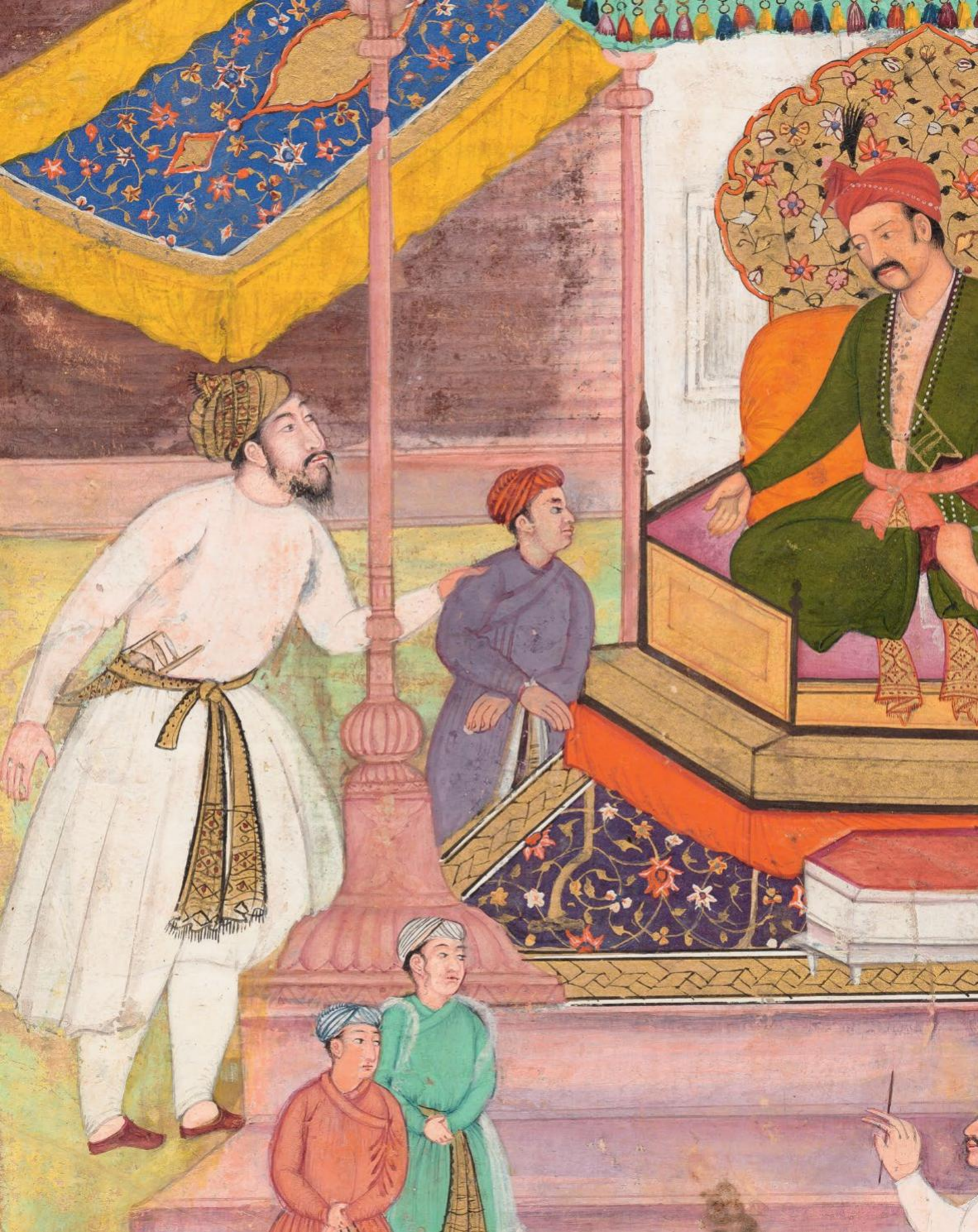
We would like to thank Will Kwiatkowski and Jerry Losty for their expert advice.

#### References:

1. H. Beveridge (trans.), *The Akbar Nama of Abu-l-Fazl*, 1897, vol. 1, pp. 203-2042.
2. This is published by Leach, 2004, p. 52. Leach suggests that this incident comes late in the long eight years, from 1559 to 1567, of Akbar's struggle with the wily 'Ali Quli Khan. She dates the incident to 1567 which we cannot agree with as we do not consider it possible to jump from a Humayun story no. 156 to a Akbar story no. 158 if that takes place in the eleventh year of his reign as she suggests. We think the 'Ali Quli Khan pursuit more likely takes place in 1559 or 1560, just before the presentation of 'Abd al-Rahim in 1561.





















## BABUR DISPATCHES HUMAYUN TO BADAKHSHAN

INDIA (MUGHAL), 1595-1600

FOLIO:

HEIGHT: 36 CM

WIDTH: 24 CM

MINIATURE:

HEIGHT: 32.2 CM

WIDTH: 17.7 CM

Opaque watercolour heightened with gold on paper.

A folio from the "Third" *Akbarnama* manuscript.

Inscribed in *naskh* within the text panel:

"[The Emperor Babur] dispatched the brow of splendour, the frontispiece of glories and eminences, the peerless imperial signature, the pupil of the eye of the sultanate and the caliphate, Abu'l-Nasr Nasir al-Din Muhammad Humayun at a distance of 3 *kurohs* from Alwar on the 9th Rajab of the auspicious year to those lands (i.e. Kabul and Badakhshan). And at the same moment he turned his exalted attention to the removal of Biban Afghan who at that time [during the Rana's disturbance had besieged Lachknaw and taken possession of it]..."<sup>1</sup>

The painting shows the Mughal emperor Babur (reigned 1526-1530) sending Prince Humayun to administer the region of Kabul and Badakhshan on 9th Rajab 933 (11th April 1527) following the conquest of Mewat. Badakhshan had been committed to Humayun since 1511 with the death of the Timurid ruler of Badakhshan, Mirza Khan. In 1520, Humayun had been appointed by Babur as the regent to Mirza Sulaiman, the infant son of the deceased Timurid monarch.

The *Akbarnama* of Abu'l Fazl is the biography of the Mughal emperor Akbar and an imperial chronicle of his reign

(1556-1605) and that of his father Humayun (1530-1540; 1555-1556).

As a prelude to their histories, details of Babur's reign and his life with the young prince Humayun are also given, such as in the episode illustrated.

As part of his conquest of India and the establishment of the Mughal empire, Babur defeated Sultan Ibrahim Lodhi in the Battle of Panipat on 21st April 1526. Though his army was vastly outnumbered, Babur's use of cannons and the introduction of gunpowder to the subcontinent ensured his victory. Babur had guns while the sultan relied on elephants.

Just prior to Humayun being dispatched to Badakhshan on 11th April 1527, Babur achieved another decisive victory over the coalition of Rajputs from Rajasthani kingdoms led by his formidable foe, the famous Rana Sanga, Maharana Sangram Singh of Mewar (reigned 1508-1528), at the Battle of Khanwa on 16th March 1527. The Hindu Rajputs were joined by Muslim Rajputs from Mewar and Afghans under Mahmud Lodhi, the son of Sikandar Lodhi of Delhi. The aim of the Rajput-Indian Muslim alliance was to restore the Lodhi

Dynasty and to expel the central Asian Babur, direct descendant of Timur, from India.

After this great victory Babur decided to postpone the pursuit of Rana Sanga back to Chitor, capital of Mewar, and to focus instead on the conquest of Mewar and its capital at Alwar. Muhammad 'Ali Jang Jang and other Mughal officers led a huge force against the seditious Ilyas Khan who was unable to resist the imperial forces. The defeated Ilyas Khan was taken back to the royal court at Agra where he was flayed alive. After the conquest of Mewar, Babur himself proceeded to Alwar, arriving on 7th April 1527, when he bestowed the treasures of Alwar on His Highness Jahanbani (Humayun).

After the annexation of Mewar, Babur turned his attention to the administration of Kabul and Badakhshan and on 11th April 1527 dispatched Humayun from his position three *kurohs* just outside Alwar. A *kurohs* in Persian, or *kos* in Sanskrit, is an ancient Indian unit of distance in use since at least the 4th century BC, about 3.07 kilometres or 1.91 miles in modern terms. We can see from the text panel that immediately after sending Humayun to Badakhshan, Babur had to quell yet another rebel, the Afghan Biban, who had taken Lucknow when he spotted an advantage during the great disturbance wrought by Rana Sanga. The life of a Mughal emperor was one of continuous military campaigns and administrative postings of Mughal princes and itinerant officers as governors in far flung regions of the ever-expanding empire, in particular for the first Mughal emperor Babur as he strove to establish the empire.

In this painting Babur is seated on his throne within a canopied pavilion as he discusses Badakhshan with Humayun. As he is still a prince,







ناصیه اجل العوان معاصر معالی طغرائی شاهی قره عیون السلطنة والخلافة ابو الفتح نصیر الدین محمد بن ورن وادرسه  
 کروی الوردنم رجب ابن سالما یون فالدرختان مالک فرمودند ودرمین دودی توجه والا بر استیصال بین افغان که دره





















لافتة ابو النصر نصير الدين محمد بن رستم وادرسه  
دزوری توجه والا بر استیصال بین افغان که در



Humayun has yet to adopt his characteristic form of headgear, the distinctive turban with a tall pointed cap that he designed himself when he ascended the throne. He listens attentively to his father with his arm raised and placed in a gesture of respect on his simple turban. The direct eye contact between the two main protagonists is telling as this is absent from the gaze of surrounding courtiers. It establishes a feeling of intimacy between ruler and heir, a bond between father and son and a clear dynastic link from which the courtiers are excluded.

Babur's throne is hexagonal and placed on a tiered dais of hexagonal form standing on splayed metal feet. The carpeted sandstone pavilion enclosing the throne is also hexagonal in form as is the kiosk which crowns the structure and the platform on which it sits. In front of the emperor are covered trays of delectable snacks and long-necked flasks (*surahis*) full of liquid refreshment. Only the prince has been allowed to step onto the podium, but while he is raised above the courtiers, he is still several steps below the ruler. On the left, attendants fan Babur with a red-haired *chowrie* (flywhisk) and carry his bow, arrows and quiver. Musicians play in the foreground while falconers carry birds of prey on gloved arms.

There is no artist attribution to this scene, which conforms to the usual circular arrangement of courtiers in front of the enthroned monarch as seen in this and other historical manuscripts of the period. Jerry Losty has observed slight artistic idiosyncrasies including the slightly squat appearance of the standing figures, the archaic projecting further eye of the falconer on the right, and the attempt at a three-quarter view from the rear for two of the courtiers at the front.

This page is one of more than twenty miniatures that have recently come to light from an important

royal manuscript thought to have belonged to Akbar's mother, Hamida Banu Begam. Scholars who have studied these paintings, in particular Linda York Leach, have identified the manuscript as a third royal *Akbarnama*.

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Leach convincingly suggests several reasons for identifying the royal family member for whom this *Akbarnama* was commissioned as Hamida Banu Begam. Firstly, the text is written in the conservative *naskh* script as opposed to the *nasta'liq* used on the other two copies. *Naskh* is a script that Hamida is thought to have preferred. From her personal library is a *naskh* manuscript with her ownership seal, penned for her just before her death. Secondly, a number of scenes centre on women and their activities, depicting them with unusual animation and intimacy, and showing scenes from the zenana that would have appealed to Hamida. These include "Humayun surprising his parents", illustrated by Leach on p. 42, fig. 1, and discussed on p. 47.

Finally, several paintings depict her husband Humayun in the context of much greater warmth, tenderness and drama than his portrayals in the other *Akbarnamas*. One of the finest, combining all these aspects, is "Festivities at the Wedding of the Emperor Humayun and Hamida Banu Begam" now in the Cynthia Hazen Polsky Collection in New York. With radiant faces painted by Daulat, this is illustrated by Leach on pp. 44-45, figs. 2, 3 and 4; and also by Jerry Losty in Andrew Topsfield (ed.), *In the Realm of Gods and Kings: Arts of India*, 2004, pp. 372-373, cat. no. 165. Humayun is also depicted majestically in "The Arrival of Humayun in the City of Lahore", illustrated in the 2009 Simon Ray *Indian & Islamic Works of Art* catalogue, pp. 56-59, cat. no. 16. A painting in the Khalili Collection of "Bayram Khan doing obeisance before Humayun" is published in Linda York Leach, *Paintings from India: The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art*, Vol. VIII, 1998, pp. 50-52, no. 10.

A painting depicting "The game of wolf-running in Tabriz", a spectacle put on for the entertainment of Humayun, now in the Cleveland Museum of Art, is illustrated by Leach on p. 46. As she observes, such a subject certainly adds a note of spectacular excitement to the depiction of Humayun's life. Similarly a painting of Humayun watching a dynamic game of polo on the same visit to Tabriz is illustrated in our Simon Ray *Indian & Islamic Works of Art* catalogue, November 2008, pp. 114-115. cat. no. 49.

#### Provenance:

From a private collection that has been in England since the 1940s.

#### Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank Jerry Losty for his expert advice and Will Kwiatkowski for his kind reading of the inscription and the identification of the subject.

#### Reference:

1. For Beveridge's translation of this section of the *Akbarnama*, see H. Beveridge (trans.), *The Akbar Nama of Abu'l-Fazl*, 1897, vol. III, pp. 266-267.





## THE ARRIVAL OF HUMAYUN IN THE CITY OF LAHORE

INDIA (MUGHAL), 1595-1600

BY MAKRA WITH PORTRAITS BY MUKUND

FOLIO:

HEIGHT: 35.6 CM

WIDTH: 23.5 CM

MINIATURE:

HEIGHT: 32.6 CM

WIDTH: 19 CM

Opaque watercolour heightened with gold on paper.

A folio from the "Third" *Akbarnama* manuscript.

Mounted on an album page most probably dating to the eighteenth century.

Inscribed to the bottom of the red border with the subject of the painting:

*amadan-e hazrat jannat ashiyani be-lahur*

"The coming of His Majesty Jannat Ashiyani to Lahore".

Further inscribed in the lower right corner with the names of the two artists:

*'amal-i makra chehra mukund*

"Work of Makra, portraits by Mukund".

The *Akbarnama* of Abu'l Fazl is the biography of the Mughal emperor Akbar and an imperial chronicle of his reign (1556-1605) and that of his father Humayun (1530-1540; 1555-1556).

The event of the Mughal emperor Humayun's arrival in Lahore took place on 24th February 1555, on his way to defeat Sikandar Shah at Sirhind, followed by his occupation of Delhi where he died in January 1556. In this painting, Humayun is shown in the fort near the river Ravi with drummers celebrating his arrival and gifts being presented to the emperor.

Humayun wears the distinctive turban with a tall pointed cap which he designed himself to distinguish his rule. A boat laden with gifts is moored on the riverbank and men are beginning to unload the boat,

entering the fort through the door in the lower left. Foreign ambassadors wearing unusual hats including a European can be seen in the first courtyard through the door. A horse accompanies these visitors in the courtyard while another horse drinks from the river to the bottom left of the painting. To the right is a camel carrying logs or rolled carpets and textiles on its back.

According to Abu'l Fazl, Humayun was given an extremely warm welcome at Lahore. He writes in the *Akbarnama*:

"The nobles of that country came forward to welcome him. They offered up thanks for this glorious favour and gave large presents. High and low were treated with royal favours according to their degree. On the 2nd *Rabli-us-Sani* (24th February 1555), the illustrious city of Lahore, which is in fact a great city in India, was made glorious by his advent, and all classes and conditions of men were freed from the evils of the times, and attained the objects for which they had been long waiting on hope's highway."<sup>1</sup>

Mukund is listed by Abu'l Fazl as one of the leading artists of Akbar's court. He is chiefly known as a portrait painter and amongst fifty-three of his known works, Som Prakash Verma in *Mughal Painters and Their Work*, 1994, pp. 304-308, lists four signed portraits by him, including a portrait of Akbar. The majority of these works are in the Jaipur Royal Collection, the British Library, London and the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.

A 1598 portrait of Genghis Khan, in the Imperial Library, Tehran, by Sanwala, is inscribed as having been sketched by Makra and coloured by Mukund. Makra is also known for his animal studies, as illustrated here by his careful and accurate depiction of the horses and the camel.

This page is one of more than twenty miniatures that have recently come







آمدن حضرت جنت اشیمان بلا هو

سیر کرا چهره کند









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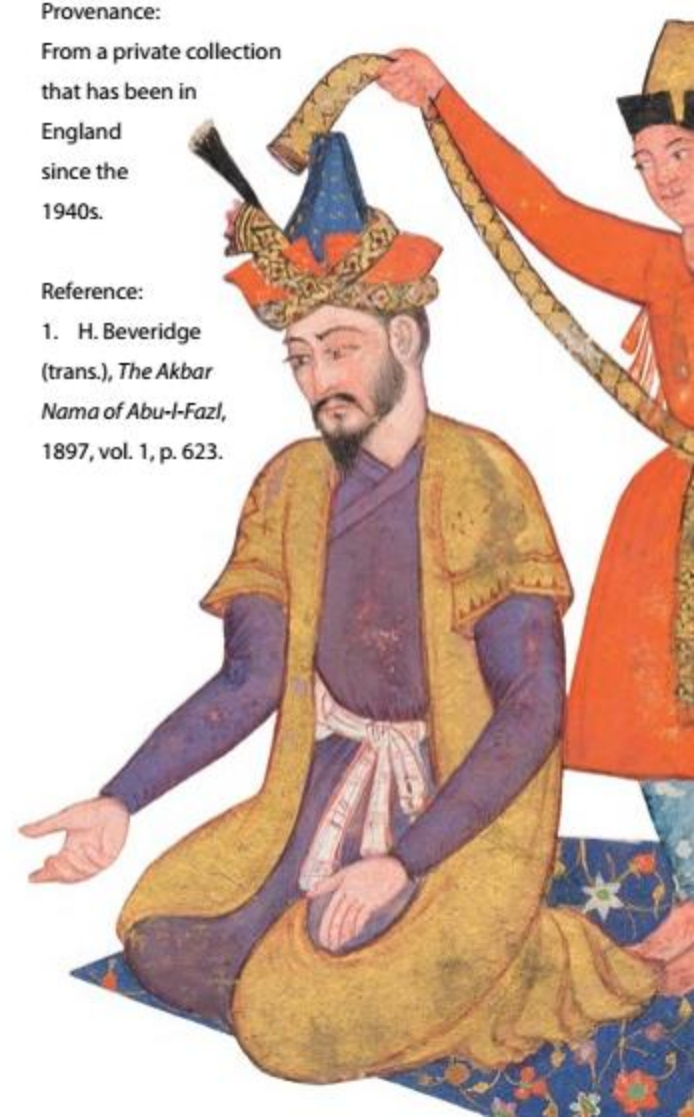
A painting depicting "The game of wolf-running in Tabriz", by Banwari, now in the Cleveland Museum of Art, is illustrated by Leach on p. 46. Leach also illustrates on p. 52, "The supply train crosses the bridge of boats on the Ganges", attributed to Basawan.

#### Provenance:

From a private collection that has been in England since the 1940s.

#### Reference:

1. H. Beveridge (trans.), *The Akbar Nama of Abu'l-Fazl*, 1897, vol. 1, p. 623.













## THE STORMING OF THE CASTLE OF FUSHANJ

INDIA (MUGHAL), 1595-1600

BY JAGANNATH

FOLIO:

HEIGHT: 27.6 CM

WIDTH: 19.4 CM

MINIATURE:

HEIGHT: 13.5 CM

WIDTH: 9.2 CM

Opaque watercolour heightened with gold on paper.

A folio from the *Zafarnama* manuscript.

Inscribed with the story in *nasta'liq* in the text panels above and below the painting and on the verso.

This painting depicts the storming of the castle of Fushanj. This was the first conquest of any place in Iran proper (*iran-zamin*) by the army of Timur in 1381; the castle was extremely well defended and the speed with which it was taken was considered to be a good omen for the conquest of the rest of Iran. The castle was the first stage in Timur's campaign against Ghiyath al-Din Pir 'Ali, the Kartid ruler of Herat, who had failed to obey Timur's summons to pay allegiance to him. The painting shows the moment at which Timur's army breached the gates of the fortress. Following its capture, the city was destroyed completely by Timur's army. In the Mughal manuscript here, it is spelled "Qushanj".<sup>1</sup>

Timur's army is depicted in a triumphant sweep from left to right, finishing with an upward surge towards Ghiyath al-Din's defences where the few remaining men, outnumbered and depleted, still fight on bravely against

Timur's ascendant forces. Both sides use bows and arrows as well as rifles and the cavalry ride magnificently caparisoned horses. Of particular beauty is the jet black steed in the lower right corner with a saddlecloth made from a fearsome tiger's pelt.

Timur's men charge to the stirring sound of drums and trumpets borne by camels, flowing unchallenged through the open gate. The angular castle walls are striated with lines of red brick and where they have collapsed, the artist shows piles of debris, strained inner walls still standing but tottering, and gaping wounds to the general architectural fabric. Some of Timur's riflemen already shoot from within the inner walls, lined up with precision like an immaculately drilled firing squad. In order that the battle does not look completely one-sided, Jagannath has depicted the mettle of Ghiyath al-Din's lead officer as he slices through the neck of a Timur commander who collapses right at the centre of the picture, a cunning placement within the composition by the artist to show the depletion of forces even on the winning side of a battle.

*A History of Timur and Khalil Sultan* was originally prepared by Timur's grandson, Ibrahim Sultan ibn Shahrukh, the governor of Shiraz. Under his patronage, the text was rewritten as the *Zafarnama* (Book of Triumph or Book of Victory) by Sharaf al-Din 'Ali Yazdi in ornate prose and completed in AH 828/1424-1425 AD. The *Zafarnama* relates the history of Timur (born 1336, reigned 1370-1405) the Mughal's most illustrious ancestor of whom its founder, Babur, was a direct descendant as Timur's great-great-grandson. According to John Seyller, the *Zafarnama* text was much acclaimed in Iran, where it was copied and illustrated frequently.<sup>2</sup>

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صاعقه کردار تا درواز درفته با دشمنان دست و گریبان شدند و ایشان را مقتور و منکوب گردانید  
 و دروازه بگشادند و لشکر منصور از اطراف و جوانب رخنه کرده بقلعه درآمد و بقتله سینفی که



از مخالفان روزبرگشته مانده بودند مجموع بر تن اشتهام کبذ نمایند و دست قیبط و تاراج برآورده قلعه  
 از سرجه بود پیرداشد و خراب ساختند در توده خاک و امل در حمله مالاک



Losty has observed that the paintings of this imperial *Zafarnama* are of the highest quality, a view shared by its discoverer Skelton for whom it remains one of his favourite Mughal manuscripts. The *Zafarnama* is the work of some of the master artists of the late Akbar period, and are attributable to the period 1595-1600. The 1590s was a period of immense activity in the Mughal studio, the earlier part of the decade being dominated by the production of three vast historical manuscripts: the widely dispersed circa 1594 *Tarikh-i-Alfi* (The History of a Thousand Years, marking the millennium of the Islamic era in 1592); and the *Chingiznama*, the history of the Mughals' ancestor Genghis Khan, now in Tehran. Both manuscripts have paintings that are often the work of several hands normally between and surrounding panels of text. The Victoria and Albert Museum's *Akbarnama* of 1590-1595, continues the multi-authorship practise and tends to reduce the incidences of text panels within the body of the paintings, sometimes eliminating it entirely.

The middle years of the decade saw the production of the brilliantly illuminated poetical works of Nizami, Jami and Amir Khusrau on which

major artists were clearly encouraged to lavish time and effort to produce their most masterful work and in which the text panels are reduced to the minimum. Where the stories were so familiar, there was little need for the intrusive text panels.

According to Losty, the *Zafarnama* marks the next stage in the development of the Mughal illustrated historical manuscripts in which the paintings, each the work of a master artist, are sandwiched between upper and lower panels of text, thereby unleashing the artist's full creativity in filling the rectangular space without any text panels to form crutches to hide an artist's difficulties in handling space and recession.

According to Losty, Jagannath had been a major designer-artist since the beginning of artists' names being added to their work in the 1580s. He contributed to the 1584 *Timurnama* and also worked independently on the poetical works of the 1590s including the *Khamsas* of both Nizami and Amir Khusrau from 1595 and 1597. Despite the small size of the painting field, he has managed to unify the present composition and suggest the sweep of the battle as Timur's forces break down the walls of the fortress and storm through, beginning the massacre of the defenders.

The format of no text panels was also adopted early in the next century in 1602-1603 for the second imperial *Akbarnama*, whose surviving volumes are divided between the British Library and the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.

The framed text pages of this *Zafarnama* manuscript

were cut out of their original folios and mounted on a lighter colour paper early in the seventeenth century. The foliation, running numbers of the miniatures and the identity of the artists were normally added to the new pages in the imperial library, as indeed happened with the first volume of the second *Akbarnama* now at the British Library. There may have been an intention to add marginal paintings in gold to illuminate the larger surface surrounding the text panels and paintings, as was with the British Library *Akbarnama*, discussed in Losty, 1982, p. 93, nos. 70-71, but this seems not to have been done.

Based on Losty's cogent analysis above of the stylistic development of paintings made for Akbar during the last decade of the sixteenth century, we have assigned a date of 1595-1600 to the three *Zafarnama* pages in the current catalogue. Seyller attempts to refine these dates even further, narrowing the range to the last three years of the decade, from 1598-1600. He publishes a page depicting "Timur outside the Fortress of Qashi", in John Seyller with introductions and interpretations by Konrad Seitz, *Mughal and Deccani Paintings: Eva and Konrad Seitz Collection of Indian Miniatures*, 2010, pp. 42-44, cat. no. 6.

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detached pages afford a glimpse of the early work of some artists who had very distinguished careers.

Seyller observes that as we refine our understanding of the styles of individual Mughal painters, the fact that only one artist is named in most ascriptions makes the *Zafarnama* paintings particularly useful diagnostic works. In the few cases in which a second artist is indicated, as in the Seitz painting where Dhanu is the lead painter, the second artist Madhu is the portraitist. This specialised function underscores the attention given to the depiction of certain historical figures while it narrows the scope of the second artist's work.

Other *Zafarnama* leaves are in the collections of the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca; the Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, California; and private collections in Europe and America. A page at Cleveland is illustrated by Sonya Rhie Quintanilla in her article "From the Fifth Vizier's Story to the Gifts of Timur: Mughal Paintings by Sravana in The Cleveland Museum of Art", *Orientations*, vol. 44, no. 8, November/December 2013, pp. 86-93, fig. 1. Quintanilla agrees with Seyller in her date of 1598-1600.

#### Provenance:

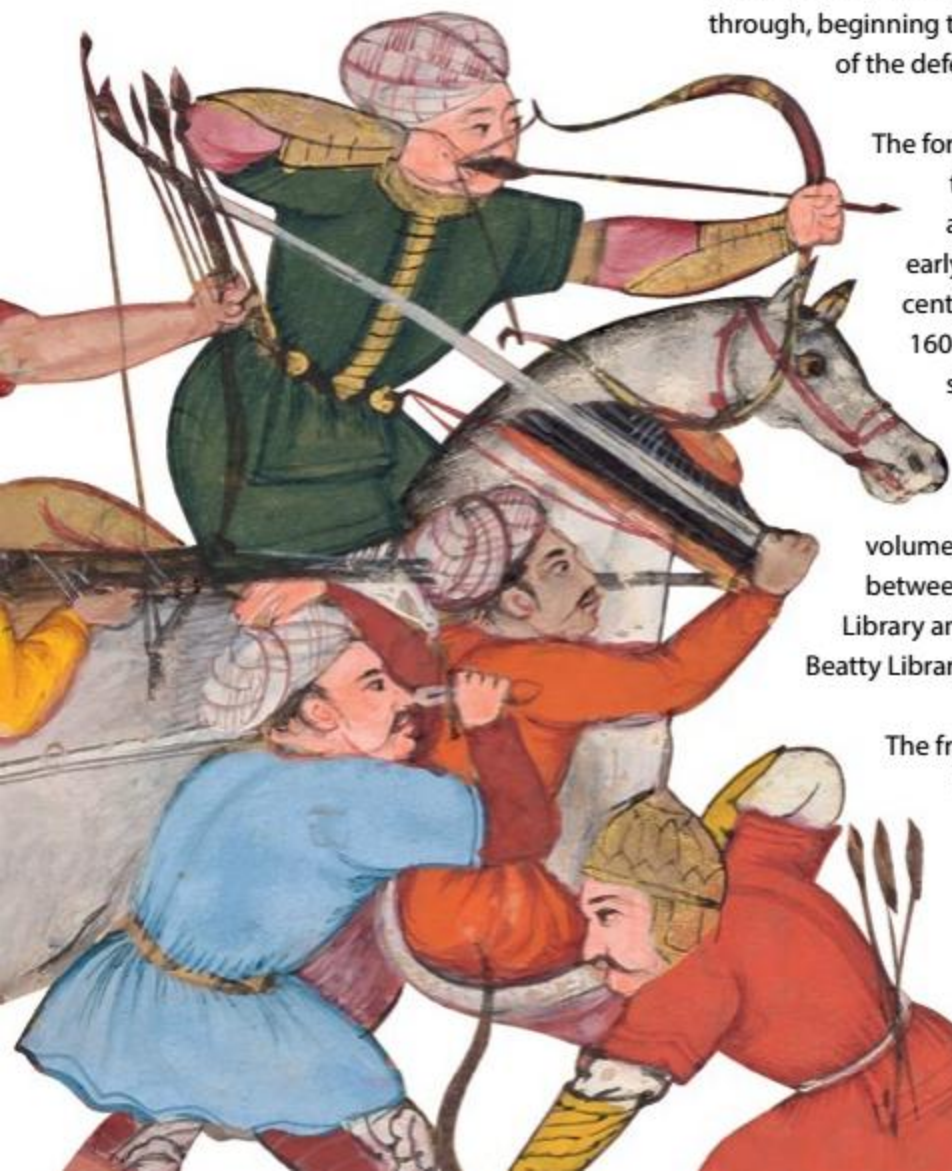
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#### References:

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کد باسی کشته چون گاه از صدمه شد باد و زان متفرق و گریزان و چون قتلیدین بکبر حینت لشکر منصور ایل و آل  
 اورا غارت کرده بالجه و برده بسیار شد سپاه شایسته نوار خضم کد بھر کجا که رود غنیمت آید باز





# **TIMUR'S FORCES LED BY HIS SON 'UMAR SHAYKH DECAPITATE AN ENEMY WHILST VANQUISHING THE ARMY OF QAMAR AL-DIN**

INDIA (MUGHAL), 1595-1600

BY JAGJIVAN KALAN

FOLIO:

HEIGHT: 28 CM

WIDTH: 19 CM

MINIATURE:

HEIGHT: 15.4 CM

WIDTH: 10 CM

Opaque watercolour heightened with gold on paper.

A folio from the *Zafarnama* manuscript.

Inscribed with the story in *nasta'liq* in the text panel above the painting and on the verso.

'Umar Shaykh (born 1354, died 1394) was the son of Timur (reigned 1370-1405) and the brother of Shahrukh. In this painting, we see the Timurid army lead by 'Umar Shaykh routing Qamar al-Din's army in 1375, though they were unable to capture Qamar al-Din himself, who had fled.<sup>1</sup> Qamar al-Din was the chief of the Turko-Mongol Dughlat clan and one of the chief rivals of Timur in Central Asia. Timur led several expeditions against him, though Qamar al-Din was always able to escape into the steppe. Finally, after an expedition in 1390, Qamar al-Din disappeared never to be seen again.

Despite the relative security offered by the rocky outcrop behind which Qamar al-Din's forces have pitched their tents, the Timurid forces have already penetrated the boundaries of the military encampment, demarcated by the wall of rough canvas held up by white pillars and a low balustrade at the back of the picture. 'Umar Shaykh's skilled cavalry stampede into enemy territory

from right to left, riding magnificently caparisoned horses replete with vividly patterned saddlecloths that recall the decorative style of Safavid paintings where every surface is ornamented. The Timurid soldiers brandish long sabres with which they cleave the enemy, and bows and arrows in quivers, though at this close range only one of them shoots from his bow.

The focus of the picture is the fallen figure of one of Qamar al-Din's men, his body collapsed on the ground, blood pouring from a gaping hole in his neck and his severed head on the ground several feet away, an expression of primal terror just before death still imprinted on his features with his shocked eyes wide open and tears of blood streaming down. Miraculously, the head stands upright like an effigy and faces left, the direction of 'Umar Shaykh's charging forces, contributing to the unimpeded visual flow of the picture. In the background, the splendidly colourful tents of Qamar al-Din's army continue the decorative splendour of the scene as a beautiful setting for the carnage. The position of another fallen soldier amongst the tents offers a parallel to the figure with

the severed head. This figure still has his head intact but he is trampled underfoot by the approaching horse.

*A History of Timur and Khalil Sultan* was originally prepared by Timur's grandson, Ibrahim Sultan ibn Shahrukh, the governor of Shiraz. Under his patronage, the text was rewritten as the *Zafarnama* (Book of Triumph or Book of Victory) by Sharaf al-Din 'Ali Yazdi in ornate prose and completed in AH 828/1424-1425 AD. The *Zafarnama* relates the history of Timur (born 1336, reigned 1370-1405) the Mughal's most illustrious ancestor of whom its founder, Babur, was a direct descendant as Timur's great-great-grandson. According to John Seyller, the *Zafarnama* text was much acclaimed in Iran, where it was copied and illustrated frequently.<sup>2</sup>

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Losty notes that the artist Jagjivan Kalan had previously worked in collaboration with master designers on earlier historical manuscripts such as the *Razmnama* and *Timurnama* in the 1580s and the *Chingiznama* dated 1596, but this *Zafarnama* page seems to be his first independent work. Its high viewpoint and somewhat old-fashioned division into foreground and background without a middle ground allow the artist to show both the battle scene raging

round the decapitation scene as well as the panicking enemy in their encampment.

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## TIMUR'S COMMANDER PULAD DECAPITATES THE CONSPIRATOR TURKHAN ERLAT

INDIA (MUGHAL), 1595-1600

BY MADHAV

FOLIO:

HEIGHT: 28 CM

WIDTH: 20 CM

MINIATURE:

HEIGHT: 12.6 CM

WIDTH: 9.5 CM

Opaque watercolour heightened with gold on paper.

A folio from the *Zafarnama* manuscript.

Inscribed with the story in *nasta'liq* in the text panels above and below the painting and on the *verso*.

This event took place in the early part of the year AH 777/1375 AD during Timur's campaign in Khwarazm. In the region of the town of Sipaya on the Oxus river, Timur encountered the army of a certain Turkhan Erlat, who had been among the conspirators involved in a failed assassination attempt on the life of Timur the previous year. After a fierce engagement, the army of Timur emerged victorious and the general Pulad was despatched after the

fugitive Turkhan. Pulad succeeded in dismounting Turkhan and decapitated him. At the same time, another commander was sent after Turkhan's brother and the heads of the two rebels were later presented before Timur.<sup>1</sup>

This painting is a virtuoso presentation of an act of supreme violence, set against an exquisite backdrop of an army not in battle as with the other two *Zafarnama* paintings in this catalogue, but calmly and methodically tying up the loose ends after their successful rout of the enemy. After the charge of cavalry we have encountered in the other two pages, the cavalcade of magnificently caparisoned horses and weary soldiers moves in slow stately fashion from right to left across the bottom of the picture. In the upper right are musicians playing trumpets and kettle drums, and as with the musicians storming the castle of Fushanj, they ride on camels. High in the sky above are birds seen in the far distance against the fading light of the atmospheric recession, giving the upper portion of the painting depth and opening up the vista after the close placement of the mid and foregrounds that theatrically situate the action right up against the viewer's gaze.

Not only has Turkhan fallen to the ground, but his horse has also collapsed with a twisted head, broken neck and legs waving lifelessly in the air. Pulad must have brought down the horse to bring down the man, and now stands triumphantly with a slight smile above Turkhan, whose dead body is literally at his feet as if in a last plaintive cry for mercy. Pulad holds the severed head that bleeds profusely from the neck.

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حواله کرد و از کلاه خودش بکشتن بجا نماند پس بر سرش زید پولادین گشته روی جلالت با و نهاد و در سم او  
 و پولاد و بفراقبال صاحب قوافی ترکن را بر زمین زده و سرش از تن بنام خود جدا کرد **پیت**  
 پسر کینه جوی از تن جدا نهاد      بنجر برید و بر گشت نهاد      دامان سردبال در پی برادرش



ترش کرد و او را بدست آورد و کارش بساخت **نظم** سرش را سما دم زن باز کرد  
 و دو دام را آتشش سپاز کرد      و پسر سرد و را پایه سر را علی رسانید آری آستان سلطنت ایشان



'Aziz Koka, Akbar's foster brother and governor of Ahmadabad in 1600.

Losty has observed that the paintings of this imperial *Zafarnama* are of the highest quality, a view shared by its discoverer Skelton for whom it remains one of his favourite Mughal manuscripts. The *Zafarnama* is the work of some of the master artists of the late Akbar period, and is attributable to the period 1595-1600. The 1590s was a period of immense activity in the Mughal studio, the earlier part of the decade being dominated by the production of three vast historical manuscripts: the widely dispersed circa 1594 *Tarikh-i-Alfi* (The History of a Thousand Years, marking the millennium of the Islamic era in 1592); and the *Chingiznama*, the history of the Mughals' ancestor Genghis Khan, now in Tehran. Both manuscripts have paintings that are often the work of several hands normally between and surrounding panels of text. The Victoria and Albert Museum's *Akbarnama* of 1590-1595, continues the practice of multi-authorship and tends to reduce the incidences of text panels within the body of the paintings, sometimes eliminating them entirely.

The middle years of the decade saw the production of the brilliantly illuminated poetical works of Nizami, Jami and Amir Khusrau on which major artists were clearly encouraged to lavish time and effort to produce their most masterful work and in which the text panels are reduced to the minimum. Where the stories were so familiar, there was little need for the intrusive text panels.

According to Losty, the *Zafarnama* marks the next stage in the development of the Mughal illustrated historical manuscripts in which the paintings, each the work of a master artist, are sandwiched between upper and lower panels of text, thereby unleashing the artist's full creativity in filling the

rectangular space without any text panels to form crutches to hide an artist's difficulties in handling space and recession.

Madhav or Madhu is one of the major artists of the later Akbari period. Madhu Kalan or Madhu the Elder seems to disappear from the scene in the early 1590s, after which the name Madhu *tout court* presumably is the same as the earlier Madhu Khurd or Madhu the Younger, the soubriquet no longer being needed. He sometimes worked as a portraitist and we can see here his excellence in this type of work, in his varied and expressive rendering of faces expressing wonder or disbelief even as they watch the beardless young Pulad decapitate the enemy commander. Losty observes that Madhu's figures arranged in a circle command the available space effortlessly. They are centred on the twisted and headless body of Turkan Erat, a pose echoed by his contorted horse lying upside down with its throat slashed.

The format of no text panels was also adopted early in the next century in 1602-1603 for the second imperial *Akbarnama*, whose surviving volumes are divided between the British Library, London, and the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.

The framed text pages of this *Zafarnama* manuscript were cut out of their original folios and mounted on a lighter colour paper in the seventeenth century. The foliation, running numbers of the miniatures and the identity of the artists were added to the new pages in the imperial library, as happened with the first

volume of the second *Akbarnama* now at the British Library. It may have been intended to add marginal paintings in gold to the larger surface surrounding the text panels and paintings, as was the case with the British Library *Akbarnama*, discussed in Losty, 1982, p. 93, nos. 70-71, and J. P. Losty and Malini Roy, *Mughal India: Art, Culture and Empire*, 2012, pp. 92-93. However, this seems not to have been done.

Based on Losty's analysis of the stylistic development of Akbari paintings in the last decade of the sixteenth century, we have assigned a date of 1595-1600 to the *Zafarnama* pages in the current catalogue. Seyller attempts to refine these dates even further, narrowing the range to the last three years of the decade, from 1598-1600. He publishes a page depicting "Timur outside the Fortress of Qashi", in John Seyller with introductions and interpretations by Konrad Seitz, *Mughal and Deccani Paintings: Eva and Konrad Seitz, Collection of Indian Miniatures*, 2010, pp. 42-44, cat. no. 6.

Although the manuscript's colophon has not yet surfaced, the style of the paintings and the roster of artists leave no doubt for Seyller that the manuscript was produced within a year or two of 1600. He notes that several artists, notably Mahesh, Khem Karan, and Tulsi Kalan, had worked on manuscripts of the 1570s (i.e. *Hamzanama* and *Darabnama*) but others, such as Hiranand and Laksman (Lachman), are known primarily from their work in the first two decades of the seventeenth century. And if the artist Payag, named in a leaf now in a private collection, is indeed the same painter as the one who gained renown during the reign of Shah Jahan, as seems likely, these

detached pages afford a glimpse of the early work of some artists who had very distinguished careers.

Seyller observes that as we refine our understanding of the styles of individual Mughal painters, the fact that only one artist is named in most ascriptions makes the *Zafarnama* paintings particularly useful diagnostic works. In the few cases in which a second artist is indicated, as in the Seitz painting where Dhanu is the lead painter, the second artist Madhu is the portraitist. This specialised function underscores the attention given to the depiction of certain historical figures while it narrows the scope of the second artist's work. Note that Madhu the portraitist in the Seitz page works as the solo artist of the present page, both designing the composition as well as painting the faces.

#### Provenance:

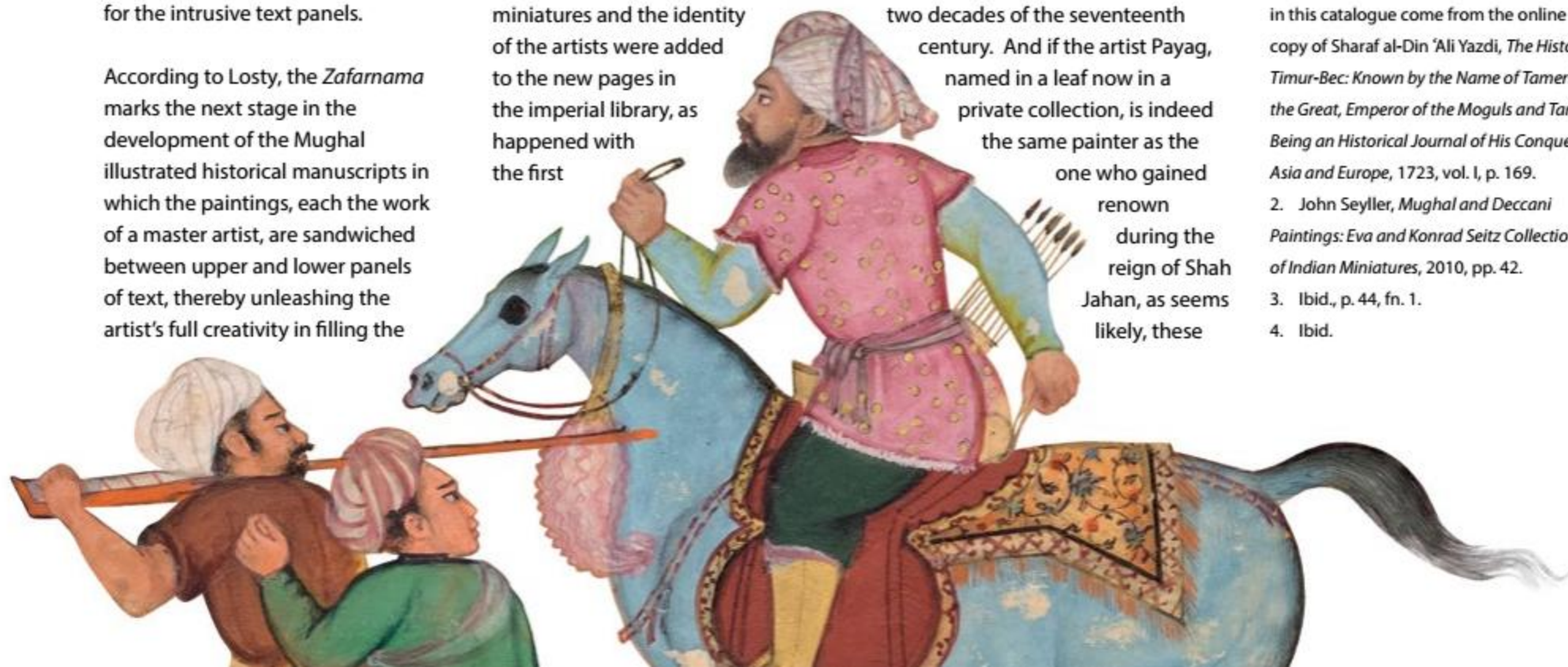
From a private collection that has been in England since the 1940s.

#### Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank Will Kwiatkowski for his reading of the inscriptions and the identification of the scene, and Jerry Losty and John Seyller for their expert advice and kind preparation of the material we have used in this catalogue description.

#### References:

1. For a translation of Sharaf al-Din Yazdi's account, see the link: [https://archive.org/details/TheHistoryOfTimurBec\\_201409](https://archive.org/details/TheHistoryOfTimurBec_201409)  
The *Zafarnama* stories we have recounted in this catalogue come from the online copy of Sharaf al-Din 'Ali Yazdi, *The History of Timur-Bec: Known by the Name of Tamerlain the Great, Emperor of the Moguls and Tartars: Being an Historical Journal of His Conquests in Asia and Europe*, 1723, vol. I, p. 169.
2. John Seyller, *Mughal and Deccani Paintings: Eva and Konrad Seitz Collection of Indian Miniatures*, 2010, pp. 42.
3. Ibid., p. 44, fn. 1.
4. Ibid.

















## A PRINCE GIVES AUDIENCE TO A SCRIBE

INDIA (MUGHAL), 1590-1595

HEIGHT: 19.7 CM

WIDTH: 13 CM

Opaque watercolour heightened with gold on paper.

Inscribed on the verso in *nasta'liq*:

"He! (i.e. God)

"The audience of His Highest Majesty Humayun Padshah with 'Abd al-Samad the painter of Iran and the poets of Kabul in the royal palace [in] the Hijri year 956/1549-1550 AD".

This is followed by an accurate English paraphrase of the Persian inscription, an attribution of the painting to 'Abd al-Samad himself, and a dating of the work to the sixteenth century.

A prince sits enthroned on a hexagonal dais within a pillared red sandstone pavilion, giving audience to a bearded kneeling courtier who discusses the contents of a scroll he holds in his hand, perhaps a petition or another matter of protocol that he has brought to the ruler's attention. On the velvet-covered stool placed as a step up to the throne is another long scroll covered in writing describing another matter meant for discussion, or already concluded and ready to be entered into the Mughal court records.

The scroll is draped over a green bound volume of records or paintings.

The prince leans against a large cushion placed against the cusped back of his golden throne. Behind the throne back can be glimpsed a red sandstone portal set into the white marble wall, leading to the lush gardens with cypress trees traversed by a sandstone colonnade linking the two palace buildings in the background.

The prince is thoroughly absorbed by his conversation with the scribe and gives him the fullest attention, paying no heed to the bustle of the court around him. He is fanned with a *chowrie* (flywhisk) by an attendant while another carries his sword in a scabbard wrapped in a textile. To the lower right corner are more scribes discussing learned matters, with a leather bound volume fastened by gold clips placed in front of them. To the bottom left are musicians, a falconer and a groom leading the prince's horse. Seated behind the scribe are two men who listen attentively to the main discussion, thus increasing the sense of import accorded to the matter being debated.

Though the Persian inscription and its English translation and attribution are both written with great confidence and seeming authority, we are uncertain about

accepting it as fact without numerous reservations. If the ruler is indeed Humayun as suggested (reigned 1530-1540; 1555-1556), he should be wearing his characteristic form of headgear, the distinctive turban with a tall pointed cap that he designed himself when he ascended the throne, especially since the inscription refers to him grandly as His Highest Majesty Humayun Padshah.

Humayun lost Mughal territories to Sher Shah Suri but regained those fifteen years later with Safavid help. If the event depicted in this painting took place in 1549, it would have happened when he was in exile in Kabul between the two periods of his reign over India and this might account for the lack of his special capped turban. At the beginning of his exile in 1540, Kabul was ruled by his half-brother and great rival, Kamran Mirza, who was unwilling to hand the city over to his brother. Humayun was able to enter Kabul in 1545 in a bloodless takeover as his brother's rule had been oppressive and the city's population was keen to get rid of him. Kamran was able to retake Kabul twice but was finally kicked out by Humayun. Perhaps in these uncertain times and with India all but lost, Humayun could not wear his grand turban or only designed it for the second brief spell of his reign.

One fact does support the inscription and that is the date 1549-1550 for

'Abd al-Samad entered the service of Humayun in Kabul in November 1549. This is countered by the style of the painting, which is not in 'Abd al-Samad's Persianate manner, but in the Mughal style of the late Akbar period during the last decade of the sixteenth century. 'Abd al-Samad's distinguished career is discussed by Sheila Canby in her chapter " 'Abd al-Samad" in Milo Cleveland Beach, Eberhard Fischer and B. N. Goswamy (eds.), *Masters of Indian Painting Vol. 1: 1100-1650*, 2011, pp. 97 to 110. None of the paintings she illustrates resembles the present in style.

We believe that the enthroned ruler depicted is more likely to be a very young emperor Akbar (reigned 1556-1605). In our Simon Ray *Indian & Islamic Works of Art* catalogue of 2017, pp. 58-59, cat. no. 26, we published a painting of a similarly youthful Akbar giving audience to his master mason, Muhammad Qasim Khan, in an almost identical throne setting within a hexagonal pavilion with gardens behind and the court bustling around. The predominantly red sandstone buildings in both paintings recall the architecture and materials used in the construction of Fatehpur Sikri.

Provenance:

Julius and Jay Bisno Collection, California, USA

Acknowledgement:

We would like to thank Will Kwiatkowski for his kind reading of the inscription.







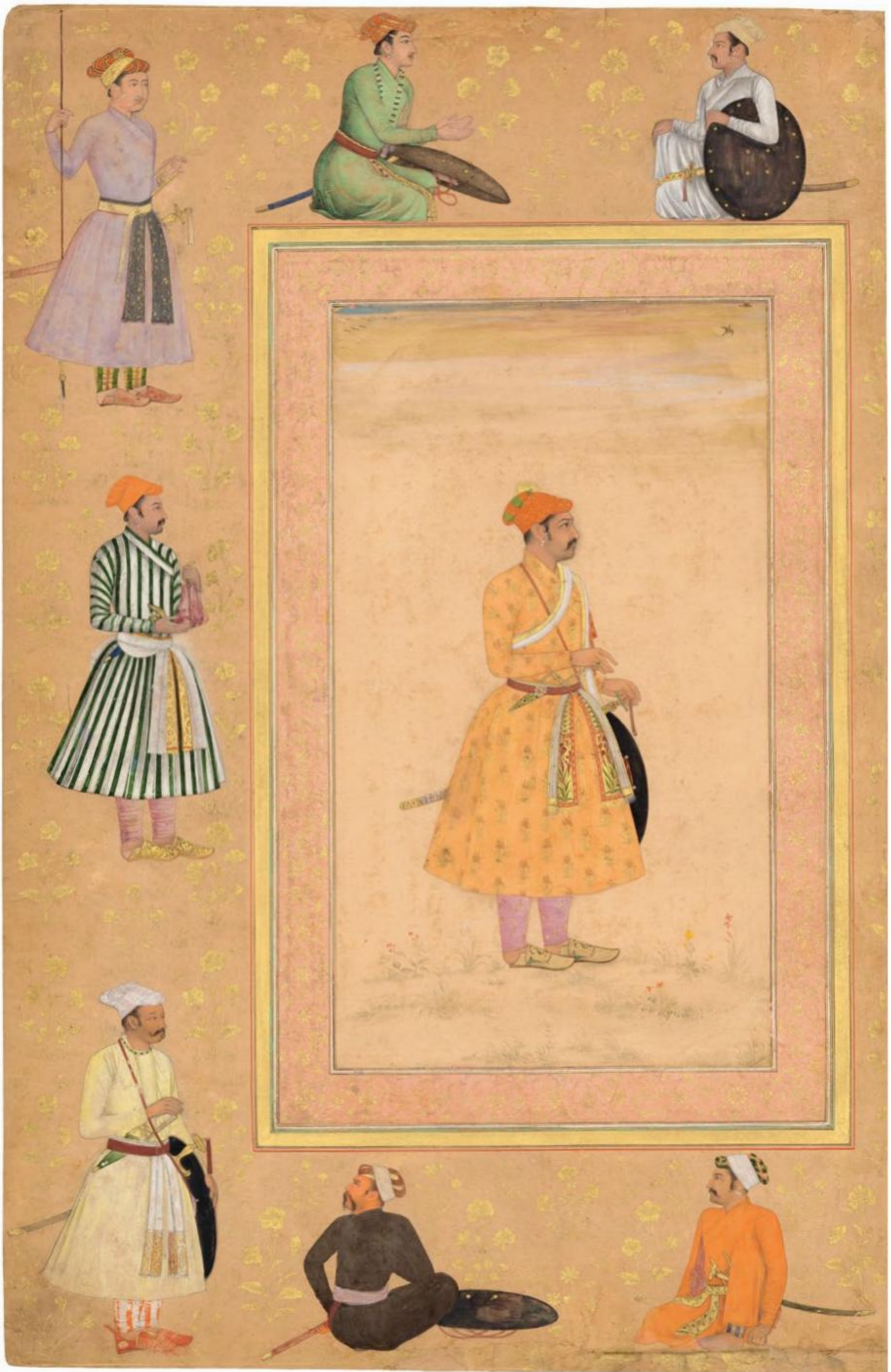
















11

**MAHARAJA JAI SINGH  
KACHHWAHA OF AMBER**

INDIA (MUGHAL), 1640-1645

FOLIO:

HEIGHT: 38.4 CM

WIDTH: 27.5 CM

PORTRAIT:

HEIGHT: 21.5 CM

WIDTH: 12.4 CM

CALLIGRAPHY ON REVERSE:

HEIGHT: 14.9 CM

WIDTH: 8.3 CM

Opaque watercolour heightened  
with gold on paper.

A folio from the Late Shah  
Jahan Album.

On the *recto* of the album page is a portrait of Maharaja Jai Singh Kachhwaha of Amber, standing on a plain ground below a sun-streaked high horizon in which birds fly in the far distance. The portrait is surrounded by a border with seven military figures carrying weapons and shields that amplify the prowess of the great Mughal general celebrated by this magnificent painting. The attendant soldiers and officers are seen against a ground of light gold floral sprays.

The border figure standing to the left of Jai Singh holds a velvet treasury bag weighted by the gold coinage or spinels contained within. This treasurer signifies Jai Singh's immense wealth, with which he funded the military campaigns for which he was not always adequately recompensed during the Aurangzeb period. This painting was, however, made for Shah Jahan, who held Jai Singh in the highest regard and continually elevated his rank, status and titles.







The so-called Late Shah Jahan Album was given this name by scholars because it was assembled during the very last years of Shah Jahan's reign between 1650 and 1658. The paintings are of superb quality and range widely in date from as early as circa 1620 to as late as around 1657; our painting dates from circa 1640-1645. The mostly single standing portraits of the album show great Mughal dignitaries and important figures of the court, each surrounded by border figures that relate closely in activity to the main figure.

Complementing the stellar portraits are a few group scenes of *mullahs* with acolytes, Majnun in the wilderness with Khwaja Khizr, or ladies bathing, set in moody landscapes under darkening skies with atmospheric effects of clouds hiding the full moon or the setting sun. While our great general Jai Singh is surrounded by a border of military personnel, the bathing ladies are surrounded by princesses examining trays of jewellery with *zenana* attendants bringing refreshments; the *mullahs* are surrounded by men of learning and holy ascetics; and Majnun is framed by wild animals and Layla approaching on her camel through the desert sands. These pages are in the Chester Beatty Museum, and are published in Elaine Wright, *Muraqqa': Imperial Mughal Albums from the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin*, 2008, pp. 106-139. As first observed by Robert Skelton, the border figures in the Late Shah Jahan Album always provide appropriate comment on the main figures.

Mounted on the verso within an elegant border of Mughal floral sprays in the classic mid seventeenth century "flower style" is a calligraphic page with four diagonal lines of *nasta'liq*, written in cloud bands floating against a dense floral arabesque.

The calligraphy dates to the early sixteenth century and is a quatrain from the *Bustan* of Sa'di. It is written by the Safavid master calligrapher Mir 'Ali (born circa 1476, active 1505-1545) and bears his signature:

*kataba al-'abd al-mudhnib mir 'ali al-katib*

"The sinful slave Mir 'Ali al-Katib wrote it".

Mir 'Ali was one of several artists working in the Safavid city of Herat in present-day Afghanistan when it was captured in 1529 by the Shaybanid ruler 'Ubaydullah Khan Uzbek. Mir 'Ali and his colleagues were taken to Bukhara where they produced illustrated manuscripts for the Uzbek rulers. Mir 'Ali was reportedly unhappy in his new environment but the quality of his work never declined. Permission to return to his hometown of Herat was denied and he died in Bukara.

Apart from a few exceptions, almost all the calligraphic pages assembled in the now dispersed Late Shah Jahan Album are by Mir 'Ali. Several pages

are signed by him and most of the unsigned pages have also been attributed to him by scholars. A single calligraphic page is signed by Sultan 'Ali Mashhadi, the calligrapher and poet who came, as his name tells us, from Mashhad. He also worked at the Timurid court in Herat though during an earlier period than Mir 'Ali, from 1470 to 1506. Like Mir 'Ali, he wrote primarily in *nasta'liq*. Unlike the unfortunate Mir 'Ali, Sultan 'Ali was able to return to his hometown and he died in Mashhad in 1520.

Mir 'Ali's work beautifully complements that of the Mughal master artists who painted the main portraits and that of the equally skilled painters of the celebrated figured and floral borders so characteristic of this album. Works by leading Persian calligraphers were particularly prized at the Mughal court and Mir 'Ali was amongst those most admired by Jahangir. Several

*qit'as* (stanzas) signed by Mir 'Ali appear in Mughal albums. It is possible that his work was brought to the Mughal court by his son Muhammad Baqir,

who immigrated to India and is mentioned by Abu'l Fazl in his *Ain-i Akbari*. The exceptional quality of Mir 'Ali's calligraphy contributes greatly to the polish and finesse that are hallmarks of the Late Shah Jahan Album.

Maharaja Jai Singh Kachhwaha of Amber (born 1611, reigned 1621-1667) was a senior general, "Mirza Raja", of the Mughal empire and the ruler of Amber, later known as Jaipur. His father was Raja Bhau Singh (ruled 1614-1621), who died at the Battle of Ajmer, upon which the ten year old Jai Singh ascended the *gaddi* (throne) and assumed the role of leader of the Kacchwaha Rajputs.

Jai Singh's distinguished military career spanned the entire reign of Shah Jahan (1628-1658) and the first decade of Aurangzeb's, from the beginning of Aurangzeb's rule in 1658 to Jai Singh's own demise at the hands of Aurangzeb in 1667. His long career consisted of alternating stints in the Deccan, in Mughal campaigns at Kandahar and Kabul, and at home in Amber. First serving in the Deccan as a young Rajput prince alongside Sultan Parwiz, the second son of Jahangir and Shah Jahan's brother, he returned to the region periodically throughout the reign of Shah Jahan.

Jai Singh took his first steps to greatness on the accession of Shah Jahan in 1627. Taking advantage of this change in sovereigns, Jai Singh's Afghan commander in the Deccan, Khan Jahan Lodi, rebelled against the Mughals with his Afghan followers, but Jai Singh brought his own army to the north to join the campaign that defeated the Afghan rebels. For this valuable service, he was made a Mughal commander with a rank of 4000.

In the 1630s, Jai Singh was sent to lay waste to the Deccani territories of Nizam al-Mulk around













Ahmadnagar and those of the 'Adil Shahis at Bijapur, and he later assisted Khan Zaman, who was given the fief of Daulatabad and Ahmadnagar. In 1636, Shah Jahan launched a grand campaign against the southern sultanates in which Jai Singh once again played a leading part. This same army led by Jai Singh was later sent to fight against the Gond kingdoms. For his part in these successful ventures, Jai Singh was promoted to the rank of 5000 and the district of Chatsu in Ajmer was added to his kingdom. By defeating the Meo robber tribes to the north of Amber, Jai Singh further increased the size of his own ancestral kingdom.

In 1638, the fort of Kandahar in Afghanistan was surrendered by the Safavid commander 'Ali Mardan Khan to Shah Jahan. Accompanied by Jai Singh, Prince Shah Shuja was sent to take command of this strategically important citadel. To prevent the Safavid Shah Safi from interfering

with this mission, Shah Jahan assembled an army of 50,000 soldiers in Kabul led by Jai Singh. It was on this occasion that Jai Singh received the unique title of Mirza Raja from Shah Jahan, which had earlier been bestowed on his great-grandfather, Raja Man Singh I, by Akbar.

In 1641, Jai Singh subdued the rebellion of Raja Jagat Singh Pathania of the hill-state of Mau-Paithan in Himachal Pradesh. He then accompanied Khan Dawran to the Deccan for two years in the mid 1640s. In 1647, Jai Singh joined in Shah Jahan's invasion of Balkh and Badakshan.

In 1649, Mughal prestige suffered a massive blow when Shah 'Abbas II recovered Kandahar for the Safavid empire. In the ensuing Mughal-Safavid War, the Mughals twice tried to recover Kandahar from the Safavids with an army led by Prince Aurangzeb, in which Jai Singh was

one of the chief commanders, but both attempts of 1649 and 1652 failed due to the poor marksmanship of the Mughal artillery and gunners. A third attempt was made in 1653 under the command of Shah Jahan's oldest and favourite son, Dara Shikoh, and once again Jai Singh was sent to do battle alongside a Mughal prince, but this final attempt also ended in failure.

The Mughals never recaptured Kandahar from the Persians. As seen from cat. no. 2 in the present catalogue, the *Akbarnama* painting of "Humayun practising archery at Kandahar" soon after Humayun captured it only to lose it and recapture it again, Kandahar bounced like a yo-yo between the Safavids and the Mughals in their perpetual struggle for control of this fort.

In 1657, Shah Jahan fell seriously ill and his three younger sons made preparations to seize the throne from

the heir apparent, Dara Shikoh. Shah Shuja in Bengal and Murad in Gujarat both crowned themselves emperor, but the wily Aurangzeb merely declared his intention of rescuing his father for the sake of Islam. In order to face off this triple threat, the spiritually advanced but militarily inept Dara Shikoh, who used to detest Jai Singh as he had fought on several of his bitter rival Aurangzeb's campaigns including the first two attempts at retaking Kandahar, once again called upon his services and made Jai Singh commander at 6000. He was sent east along with Dara Shikoh's son, Sulaiman, and the Afghan general Diler Khan. They triumphed over Shah Shuja at the Battle of Bahadurpur on 14th February 1657 and chased him back to Bengal in May.

However, during this time Aurangzeb had won the battles of Dharmat and Samugarh and took Agra on 8th June 1657. Jai Singh and his





men were stuck in the east while their homes and families in the west were at the mercy of Aurangzeb's troops, so he and Diler Khan advised Prince Sulaiman to flee while they submitted to the new emperor. Jai Singh eventually became a staunch supporter of Aurangzeb during the final struggles for succession and the early years of his reign.

Within a few years of Aurangzeb's accession in 1658, Jai Singh was promoted to the rank of 7000, the highest possible for a Mughal general. He was given the title of Viceroy of the Deccan, and asked to fight there once more. Stationed at Aurangabad, he took on the Maratha leader Shivaji with 44,000 troops, and negotiated his submission on terms favourable to the Mughals. Nonetheless, when Shivaji managed to escape and avoid capital punishment when brought before the Mughal court at Agra, Aurangzeb now Emperor 'Alamgir,

held Jai Singh's son Ram Singh responsible, took away his estates and banished him from court. He also blamed Jai Singh personally, thinking he had made a secret pact to help Shivaji escape, and had him killed by poison. At the news of Jai Singh's death in Burhanpur in 1667, the emperor declared it to be his greatest joy.

Unlike other generals who had failed miserably in the Deccan, Jai Singh was punished harshly despite his many significant triumphs. For the cost of his military campaign in the Deccan, Jai Singh received only three million rupees in expenses from Aurangzeb though he had spent ten million from the accumulated ancestral hoard of his own Amber *toshkana* (treasury).

This is why the treasurer holding a bag of spinels is such a poignant reflection when seen through a historical lens, though at the time

of a painting made for Shah Jahan in around 1640-1645, Jai Singh's fall from grace could not have been anticipated. Yet so complex was Aurangzeb's personality due to a mixture of deep religious piety, unbridled ambition, fratricidal guilt and feelings of insecurity during the early years of his reign, that he erected a cenotaph in the form of a kiosk (*chhatra*) on the bank of the Tapti River in Burhanpur in honour of Mirza Raja Jai Singh I, the very man he had ruined. After this monument was built, Jai Singh was posthumously called Raja ki Chhatra.

It is clear from this brief summary of Jai Singh's career that successive Mughal princes and emperors relied on him to achieve their military goals and we can understand why he was held in such high esteem; yet he was also subject to their whims, fluctuating needs and shifting alliances, and often caught in the fall-out between feuding members

of the same ruling dynasty. In the Mughal system of inheritance, the next ruler to sit on the throne was not determined through primogeniture, where the right of succession belonged automatically to the firstborn child, but by royal princes openly competing for power through military campaigns and increasing their influence at court. In such a toxic competitive atmosphere that included factions, banishment of princes, fratricide and the house arrest of aged fathers like Shah Jahan being imprisoned in Agra Fort by Aurangzeb after he had defeated Dara Shikoh, the services of a capable general like Jai Singh would be not only be sought after but indeed vied for.

In this most sensitively observed portrait, we are reminded by his handsome and intelligent features, with a gaze at once commanding yet thoughtful and perceptive, that Jai Singh was not just the great Mughal





general Mirza Raja but also a Rajput prince of lofty birth and the ruler of his own ancient kingdom. By his youthful appearance, vigour of expression, black hair and lack of a beard, we judge him to be around 35 years of age.

The beauty of his profile is achieved through the finesse of the outlines; the delicacy with which the facial hair is drawn using subtle gradations in thickness; the barely-there hints of stubble used to define and contour the chin and jaw; and the doubling of many elements including a straight sideburn ornamented by a curling sideburn, double eyelids accented by long double eyelashes, and a pair of pearls forming the earring that enhances the double rhythms. The master artist has achieved the admirable feat of portraying a man of action at the height of his powers, yet also inflected his visage with an element of kindness. We can discern in his profile the ability to listen to reason and to judge a situation with care and balance; in sum total a highly *simpatico* figure that was a steady, reliable voice amidst the kerfuffle of rebels to be squashed and bitter wars of succession to be fought.

The identification of Jai Singh was first made by John Seyller, and this has recently been confirmed by the kind opinion of Catherine Glynn and Ellen Smart, authors of the article, "A Mughal Icon Re-Examined" in *Artibus Asiae*, 1997, vol. 57, no. 1/2, pp. 5-15. In this article Glynn and Smart re-examine a famous Mughal double portrait at the Los Angeles County Museum, in which the two men were long identified incorrectly for the right figure as the Mughal prince Shah Shuja and correctly for the left figure as Raja Gaj Singh of Marwar. The painting was attributed to the painter Bichitr by Milo Cleveland Beach and supported by Stuart Cary Welch.

While most scholars discussing this frequently published painting have agreed the Gaj Singh identification to be correct, and the attribution to Bichitr is also generally accepted, they have consistently declared the figure on the right to be wrongly identified by the inscription above, which has been dismissed as erroneous and possibly a later addition to the painting.

Glynn and Smart argue that the misidentification of Jai Singh as Shah Shuja is the result of persistently ignoring the Hindi *devanagari* inscription above the image, which clearly

states that this is the "likeness of Maharaja Jai Singh". They accept both the inscriptions on the painting to be authentic and of the period and believe that both rulers are correctly identified. Thus by their analysis, Jai Singh is the same figure depicted in our album page, though he is only around 21-22 years old in the LACMA picture, more than ten years younger than the 35 years in

our portrait. According to Glynn and Smart, Jai Singh of Amber and Gaj Singh of Marwar were equal in status and occupied similar exalted positions in the Mughal hierarchy; they are both found in

prominent positions in many Mughal *darbar* scenes.

The authors write that although Jai Singh's features change as he develops from teenager to adult, contemporary inscriptions and the prominent and specific roles he played in court affairs allow us to identify his physical characteristics. Jai Singh is easily recognised within crowded Mughal *darbar* paintings and indeed appears in most of them, allowing scholars to search for consistency through his evolving features. Glynn and Smart identify Jai Singh's distinctive characteristics to include, "a bulge of hair at the nape of his neck, down-turned moustache, full lips set in a slight pout with protruding lower lip, long sideburns, a somewhat oversized ear and a square chin". All these features can be seen in the present painting, including the lower lip that sticks out further than the top lip, and the ear that looks rather big in relation to his other features.

Jai Singh's sumptuous costume is unified by the two shades of saffron that colour his *bandhani* (tie-dye) turban, the reddish-yellow of the spice itself, and the golden yellow saffron of his robe made with a blend of orange and yellow. His *jama* (coat) has an exquisite diaper of lilies with nodding stamens tied with a *patka* (sash) decorated with super-suave mix-and-match motifs of red *Celosia argentea* blossoms bordered by vertical stripes, set against horizontal cloud bands and tiger pelt marks, the whole finished with delicate fringed ends in two thread densities.

The *Celosia argentea* was identified by Ellen Smart who has researched the identification of plant material in Mughal paintings. We had originally identified the flowers on the *patka* as hyacinths, but according to Smart, hyacinths are not known in





South Asia, nor do they appear in the Mughal paintings that she has examined. However, Smart has identified the *Celosia argentea* in other Mughal paintings. The flower has a swirly top and silver sides, both of which are depicted on the *patka*. The colours are correct for this identification, as is the leaf shape. The angled stem of the secondary flowers, characteristic of this species, is also shown on the *patka*.

A painting that has this flower is the Balchand equestrian portrait of Akbar in the Chester Beatty Library, illustrated on p. 367, no. 55 of Elaine Wright's *Muraqqa'*. This Akbar portrait is also from the Late Shah Jahan Album and the border figures bear symbols of kingship such as royal falcons. Two angels bear an orb and a crown.

Smart observes that Jai Singh's *patka* itself is a rare type with a gold ground, written about at length by Mary Hunt Kahlenberg in her symposium article, "A Study of the Development and Use of the Mughal *Patka*" in Pratapaditya Pal (ed.), *Aspects of Indian Art*, 1972, p. 155ff. Kahlenberg describes a triple-weave brocade in which the face of the *patka* is gold thread. Rahul Jain has figured out how this complicated weaving was done and has reconstructed the loom, on which a triple-weave gold-faced fabric has been woven. There are very few of these seventeenth century *patkas* extant.

The courtly *patka* is secured for martial activities by a leather belt and buckle holding his jewelled *katar* (thrust- or push-dagger) that is fastened with a jewelled brooch consisting of a cameo encircled by pearls. A leather strap across his shoulder bears his shield and his *talwar* sword.

The coat is worn over lavender trousers (*pajamas*) and elegant slip-ons exposing his well-turned ankles and heels; these suede slippers with green velvet cut-outs are clearly more suited for the court than the battlefield, as are his lavishly embellished ceremonial weapons. The unfaltering taste of Jai Singh's chic ensemble reminds us of the formidable reputation of the Amber *toshkana*, celebrated as a repository of some of the greatest textiles made during the Mughal period,

many of them originating from the Deccan. In the Spink catalogue, *The Art of Textiles*, 1989, pp. 72-73, cat. no. 96, is a famous fragment from a stencilled, resist-painted and dyed cotton Golconda summer carpet made for the Kacchwaha clan at Amber Palace, similar in design to the Burhanpur example in the Cincinnati Art Museum, published in Ellen S. Smart and Daniel S. Walker, *Pride of the Princes: Indian Art of the Mughal Era in the Cincinnati Art Museum*, 1985, pp. 88-89, cat no. 65 and col. pl. 65. Jai Singh probably

collected the Amber Palace textile while stationed in the Deccan.

Jai Singh's *jama* is tied under the left arm in the Hindu Rajput manner. In the LACMA double portrait, Jai Singh's *jama* is tied under the right arm in Muslim fashion, though that of Gaj Singh is tied Hindu style under his left. Smart has observed that this *jama*-tying issue has proved a red herring that has confused the proper identification of Jai Singh at LACMA for decades.

As evidenced by other paintings, Jai Singh tied his *jama* both ways to reflect severally his Hindu background and his prominent role at the Muslim imperial court. Glynn and Smart illustrate on p. 12, fig. 5 of their article a detail from a *Padshahnama* painting of 1628 showing Shah Jahan receiving his sons after his accession, with the beardless seventeen-year old Jai Singh, identified by a Persian inscription; and on p. 13, fig. 8, a detail from a *Padshahnama* painting of 1633, when Jai Singh was twenty-two. In both these details, Jai Singh ties his *jama* Muslim style under the right arm while attending the Mughal court and his characteristic facial features can already be discerned despite his youth, including the distinctive protruding lower lip and bulging nape of hair.

It is worth repeating here the well-known fact that princesses from both the houses of Amber and Marwar became the wives of Mughal princes, thus cementing with matrimonial and blood ties the close military and administrative bonds. Jahangir married an Amber princess, Koka Kumari, an aunt of Jai Singh's, and Shah Jahan himself





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SATURDAY AFTERNOON, JANUARY 4TH



[NUMBER 185]





was born of Jagat Gosaini, daughter of Uday Singh of Marwar, and an aunt of Gaj Singh's.

Pictorial evidence therefore leads to the conclusion that *jama*-tying practices were less strict religious custom and more court etiquette and protocol. When Jai Singh was at the Mughal court, he adopted Mughal court trappings including the way the costume

was worn. At the same time, if read with caution, the way the *jama* is tied can help

interpret the border figures that surround Jai Singh's main portrait. Two of the figures to the upper and lower right tie their *jamās* under the right arm Muslim style, while four of the figures tie theirs under the left arm Hindu style. It is difficult to discern the manner of the *jama* in the figure seated with his back to us. This mix of Muslim and Hindu soldiers accurately reflects the composition of the Mughal army forces led by the Mirza Raja, while the fact that the treasurer is Hindu signals that Jai Singh's vast wealth was derived from his own Amber *toshkana* and not from the Mughal treasury. In all the album pages, the border figures throw light on the main figure, so in this folio the complex message reflects the complementary yet contradictory views that Jai Singh was well able to fund his military campaigns through his immense wealth, but he could also add to his wealth and glory as a result of serving on Mughal campaigns. At the same time, the risks of losing everything as a Mughal officer including property, estates and even his life were always there.

Seyller draws our attention to a *Padshahnama* painting of circa 1640 depicting a scene that took place on 16th March 1638, "The Departure of Prince Shah Shuja for Kabul", to take part in the aforementioned seizure of Kandahar. This is illustrated in Milo Cleveland Beach and Ebba Koch with new translations by Wheeler Thackston, *King of the World: The Padshahnama, An Imperial Manuscript from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle*, 1997, pp. 82-83, pl. 32. Here Jai Singh stands at the bottom of the composition, looking up at the emperor and prince with his right arm raised in salute. Despite this emphatic show of loyalty to the Mughals, he wears his yellow *jama* tied below the left

arm in the Hindu style, adding to the evidence that *jama*-tying was an inconsistent practice for Jai Singh even when at the Mughal court. In 1638 when the Kandahar campaign took place, Jai Singh was 27 and when this *Padshahnama* painting was done a couple of years later by Murar, Jai Singh was around 29 or 30, half a decade younger than the 35 year old in our painting, but easily recognisable as the same man including the diagnostic bulge of hair at the nape of the neck.

While the identity of Jai Singh is unquestionable, as is the calligrapher Mir 'Ali, the undisputedly great artist responsible for our painting cannot be so easily identified, and the fine artists of the borders even less so, as these are the work of several different hands.

John Seyller has attributed our portrait to the Mughal master Payag, who was active in the imperial *atelier* from around 1591 until 1658, the end of Shah Jahan's reign. According to Seyller, the distinguishing feature of this portrait is the fleshy and voluminous rendering of Jai Singh's head, which is thrust forward from the background by the dark contour line, especially from the lips to the throat. For Seyller, this is a hallmark of Payag, who often uses *chiaroscuro* modelling, but not in this formal portrait where atmospheric effects would not be appropriate. The shape and articulation of the hands correspond closely to the hands in Payag's portrait of Islam Khan Mashhadi of circa 1640, also from the Late Shah Jahan Album and now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (MMA 55.121.26). There are also comparable figures in folio 195A of the *Padshahnama* that is signed by Payag and dated to circa 1640, illustrated in Beach and Koch, 1997, pl. 39; in particular, the figure in blue in the lower left corner, the figure holding a staff in the bottom





centre, and the figure behind the Ethiopian in the lower right. The corpulent figure in the lower left-centre edge wears a *jama* that is similar in colour and pattern to Jai Singh's. The hint of cloud-streaked sky above Jai Singh is also a detail often used by Payag.

As another possibility, Ellen Smart has suggested Bichitr, who was something of a mysterious figure who apparently had ties with Amber and thus would have had the opportunity to observe Jai Singh closely both at Amber and at the Mughal court. Bichitr is the attribution for the LACMA double portrait that is widely accepted and if Smart's attribution for our painting is considered just as plausible, then the painter of both pictures is one and the same. Looking at the emphatic outlines of both the faces of Jai Singh and Gaj Singh in the LACMA picture, we can see the same strong outlining technique in profiles otherwise marked by supreme delicacy that Seyller has used as a diagnostic feature for Payag. In addition to the strong line of both profiles they each have a slight haze of *chiaroscuro* around them, which can be seen lingering around the profile of Jai Singh in our picture.

The LACMA double portrait is illustrated in detail in Pratapaditya Pal, *Indian Painting Volume I, 1000-1700: A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection*, 1993, pp. 171, 270-273, cat. no. 5. Pal supports the identification of Shah Shuja by suggesting the inscriptions were later additions by a Marwar scribe who recognised Gaj Singh but not the second figure. This is the view countered by Glynn and Smart, who hold that the inscriptions were made contemporaneously and probably by an Amber scribe who would have known the identities of both figures.

Pal also illustrates on p. 277 a Late Shah Jahan Album page depicting Shah Jahan. Though this has no signature, Pal suggests that it might be by Bichitr as it shares with other works all his hallmarks of controlled technique, formal elegance and brilliant finish also evident in the double portrait and in the present picture. As noted by Amina Okada who illustrates a group of signed, ascribed and attributed Bichitr paintings in *Indian Miniatures of the Mughal Court*, 1992, p. 167, Bichitr excelled at the depiction of extremely fine hands with thin supple fingers, of which Jai Singh is clearly endowed. The Shah Jahan at LACMA also has eloquent hands and fingers so expressive that we can judge the light pressure with which he holds the *sarpech*.

As we have used the outline of Jai Singh's profile and his fingers as diagnostic features that can be applied to both Payag and Bichitr, perhaps we must conclude that in this portrait there are not enough idiosyncrasies to distinguish a particular hand with certainty. The remarks we have cited on the techniques of the two distinguished painters in support of our possible attributions may also be seen in the work of many important Mughal artists. As observed by Jerry Losty, there were many extremely fine ones around at the time of this portrait including Hashim and Hunhar who do not have obvious idiosyncrasies. However, the fact that such eminent masters have been suggested by scholars as candidates for our portrait testifies to its undoubted quality. Though our attributions are not final, the process of attempting them draws clear parallels with many Mughal masterpieces as well as

drawing attention to our painting's quality and this makes the exercise eminently worthwhile.

The Late Shah Jahan Album was part of the loot taken by Nadir Shah from Delhi in 1739 during his invasion of India. In the late nineteenth century the album was taken to Russia by a brother of Nasir al-Din Shah, the Qajar ruler of Iran, and sold to an Armenian dealer who subsequently brought it to Paris in 1909 and sold it to the French dealer Georges Demotte. It was dispersed in Paris after Demotte split many of the folios, separating the paintings from their associated calligraphy, re-backing them with thin paper or card to sell them separately, thereby increasing his profits greatly.

A comprehensive discussion of the Late Shah Jahan Album is found in Elaine Wright, *Muraqqa': Imperial Mughal Albums from the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin*, 2008, pp. 106-139. The Chester Beatty has twenty folios of this magnificent album, of which twelve remain intact with a picture on one side and calligraphy on the

other. Wright lists in Appendix 3 on pp. 462-466 the 109 folios known to survive. Our previously unrecorded double-sided folio with both painting and calligraphy intact is a significant addition to the known group.

#### Provenance:

The Émile Tabbagh Collection, Paris and New York, before 1933  
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, purchased from the public sale of *The Emile Tabbagh Collection: Early Mediterranean and Near Eastern Art*, at the American Art Association and Anderson Galleries, Inc, New York, on 3rd to 4th January 1936, lot 185  
Given by Abby Aldrich Rockefeller to her daughter Abby "Babs" Rockefeller Mauzé in February 1958  
Given by Abby "Babs" Rockefeller Mauzé to her daughter Marilyn Ellen Milton who married William Kelly Simpson on 19th June 1953  
Professor William Kelly Simpson, until 2017

#### Published and Exhibited:

*The Emile Tabbagh Collection: A Magnificent Collection of Near Eastern and Early Mediterranean Art: Ceramics, Miniatures, Oriental Rugs, Ancient Glass*, at the American Art Association and Anderson Galleries, Inc, 30 East 57th Street, New York, on 3rd to 4th January 1936, pp. 94-95, lot 185. This lot was sold on the afternoon of 4th January after 2:30 pm and the auction was conducted by Hiram H. Parke, Otto Bernet and H. E. Russell, Jr.

#### Acknowledgements:

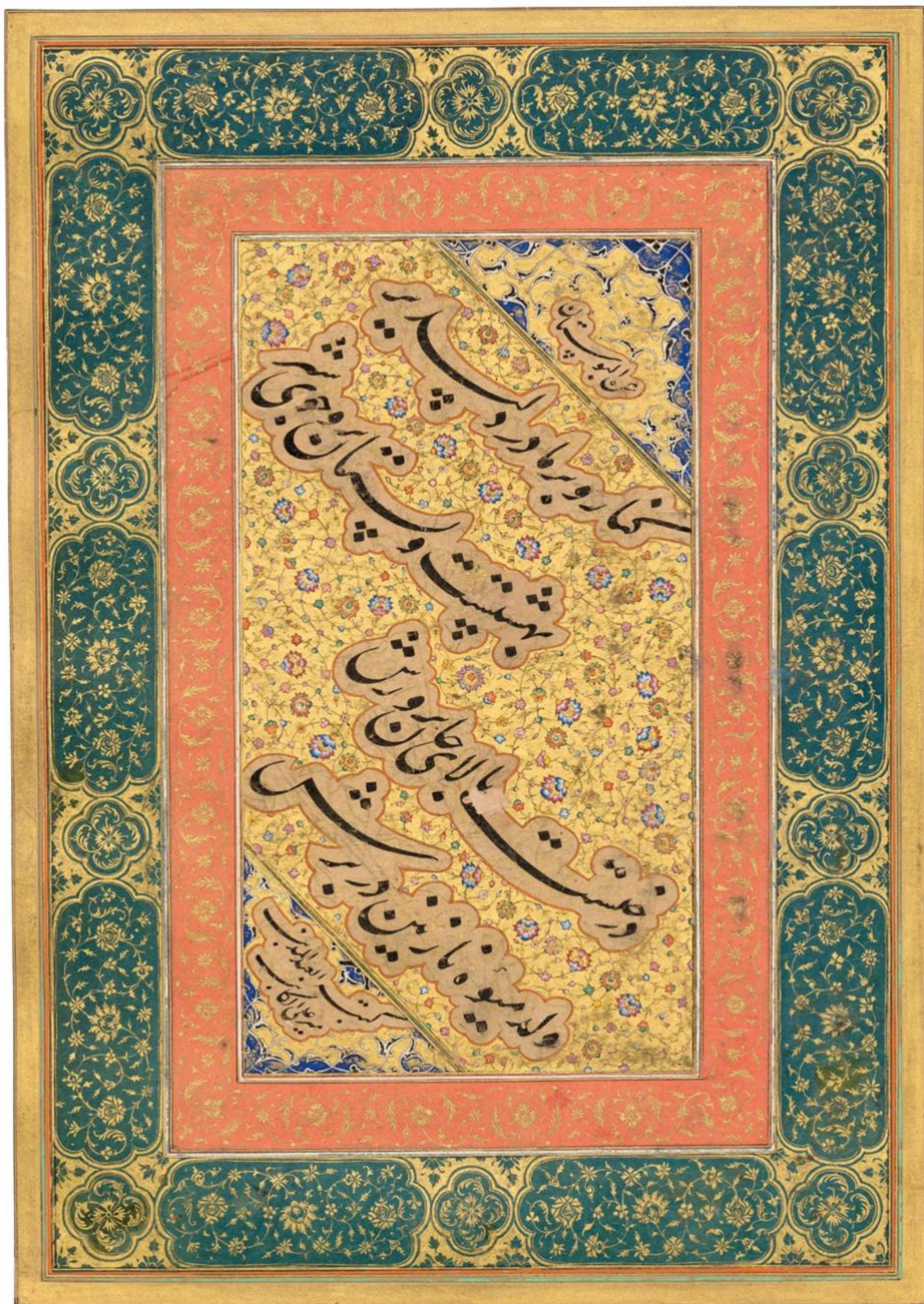
We would like to thank Ellen Smart and John Seyller for their expert advice, kind identification of Jai Singh and suggested attributions.

#### Provenance Details:

Émile Tabbagh (1879-1933) Paris and New York was a famous collector of Islamic art and antiquities from the Near East whose now dispersed collection can be seen in museums and private collections worldwide. Examples include a large *lajvardina* plate in the Musée de Louvre, Paris (OA 6456)









acquired from Tabbagh in 1911 and the only example of this type with a turquoise glaze; six leaves from the *Majma' al-tavarikh* by Hafiz-i Abru in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore; another leaf in the Brooklyn Museum, New York; and a further leaf at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City.

In 1917 Tabbagh's company Messieurs Émile Tabbagh et Cie of Paris and New York sold a group of Greek, Saracenic, Mesopotamian and Persian faience and glass at the American Art Galleries then on Madison Square South. Following Tabbagh's death on 31st December 1933, the works of art in his collection inherited by his wife Marie Tabbagh and his sons Maurice and Henri were sold at two separate auctions. The first was held on 20th and 21st March 1935 in Paris and the second on 3rd and 4th January 1936 in New York, from which Abby Aldrich Rockefeller acquired our painting as lot 185.

Abigail Green "Abby" Aldrich Rockefeller (1874-1948) was an American socialite and philanthropist and the wife of John D. Rockefeller Jr. With her marriage to the financier and philanthropist, she became a prominent member of the Rockefeller family. Her many philanthropic projects included the advocacy of women, their welfare, advancement and education, and the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia. As a prominent patron of modern art, collecting the works of contemporary American artists as well as Van Gogh, Degas, Matisse, Picasso and Cézanne, she was the driving force behind the establishment of the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1929.

Based on documents kindly provided by the Rockefeller Archive Center, from the itemised folders on the distribution of possessions from Abby Aldrich Rockefeller to her daughter Abby "Babs" Rockefeller Mauzé, we have a photo inventory of the portrait (AAR p. 34#38) with information of its purchase on 4th January 1936. It was purchased on behalf of Mrs Rockefeller by her Asian art advisor, Laurance P. Roberts, Curator of Eastern Art at the Brooklyn Museum. A note says that she paid approximately \$400 but the annotated on-line catalogue of the Émile Tabbagh Collection on the Metropolitan

Museum of Art website gives the auction price precisely as \$475 US Dollars. Further fascinating information from the Rockefeller Archive shows that the painting was sent for double-sided framing with a glass back to show the Mir 'Ali calligraphy on 13th January 1938 and by 4th June 1938 it was hanging in Mrs Rockefeller's sitting room. Finally a note records that it was given to Mrs Mauzé in February 1958.

Like her mother, Abby "Babs" Rockefeller Mauzé (1903-1976) was also an eminent New York socialite and philanthropist. She was the only daughter and the eldest of the six children of John D. and Abby Aldrich Rockefeller and referred to as Babs to avoid confusion with her mother. Babs married her childhood friend David M. Milton in 1925 and they had two daughters Abigail Rockefeller Milton, who married George Dorr O'Neill and Marilyn Ellen Milton, who married William Kelly Simpson. After her divorce from Milton in 1943, Babs married Irving H. Pardee in 1946; Pardee was a neurologist who died in 1949. Her third marriage was to Jean Mauzé, from 1953 until his death in 1974.

Marilyn Ellen Rockefeller Milton Simpson (1931-1980) was the younger of the two daughters of Abby "Babs" Rockefeller Mauzé. She married William Kelly Simpson on 19th June 1953.

William Kelly Simpson (1928-2017) was born in Manhattan. His father, Kenneth F. Simpson, was an influential civic leader who served as Assistant

United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York and Chairman of the New York County Republican Committee who in 1940 was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. Professor Simpson attended Manhattan's Buckley School, Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts and Yale University from where he graduated in 1947 with a B.A. in English, and obtained his M.A. in philosophy in 1948. That same year, he made his initial foray into Egyptology, when curators W. C. Hayes and Ambrose Lansing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art hired the graduate as a Curatorial Assistant in the Department of Egyptian Art. Imbued with an insatiable curiosity and precocious mind, Professor Simpson penned his first Egyptological article, an exploration of a Fourth Dynasty portrait head, at just twenty-one years of age. That piece, published in the *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, heralded a remarkable scholarly output, with more than 130 articles and twenty books written throughout his lifetime.

Simpson's position within the Met's Department of Egyptian Art forever changed the trajectory of his life, and indeed, the wider field of Egyptology. It was during his time at the Met that Simpson participated in his first archaeological expedition - an excavation in Iraq sponsored by the British School of Archaeology - and decided to pursue graduate work in Egyptology. In the early 1950s, the young scholar commuted between his work in New York and his studies at Yale, all while serving in the 101st Armed

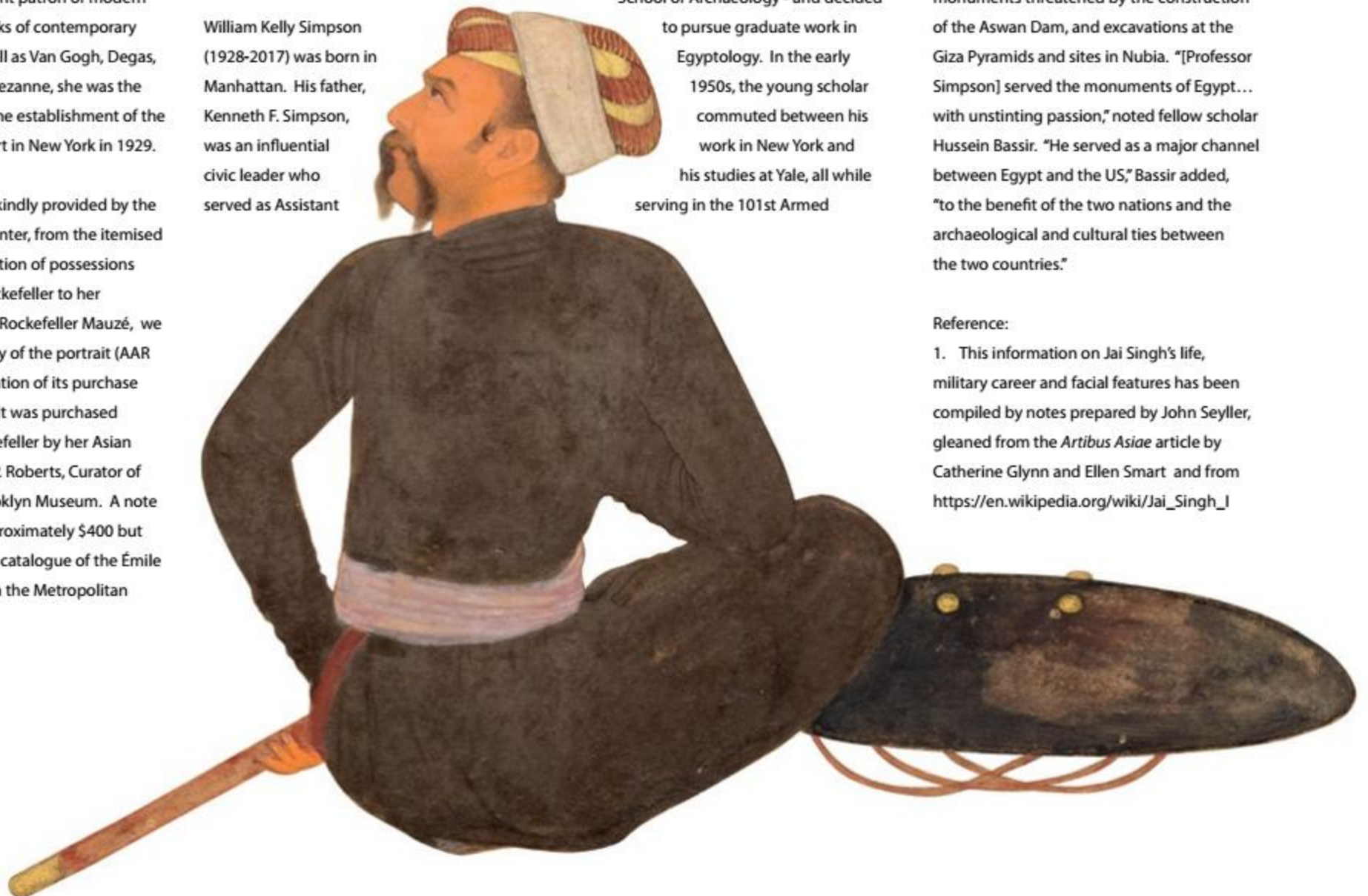
Cavalry of the New York National Guard. In June 1953, Simpson married the granddaughter of John D. Rockefeller Jr., Marilyn Ellen.

Simpson studied for his doctorate under the noted Egyptologist Ludlow Bull, and wrote his dissertation on the excavation of the pyramid of Amenemhat I. It was not until obtaining his Ph.D. from Yale in 1954, however, that Simpson made his first trek to Egypt, after being awarded a prestigious Fulbright research fellowship. Simpson led excavation teams at the Bent Pyramid at Dahshur and at Mitrahineh for two years.

Upon returning to the United States, he was immediately offered a fellowship at Harvard's Centre for Middle Eastern Studies, and in 1958 was appointed Assistant Professor of Near Eastern Languages and Literature at Yale. During Professor Simpson's forty-six years in academia, he rose to Associate Professor, Professor, and Chair of Yale's Department of Near Eastern Languages and Literature. He was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in the Humanities; and positioned Yale as one of the foremost centres for Egyptology. Among his many archaeological projects in Egypt were the famed Pennsylvania-Yale Expeditions recording New Kingdom tombs and Meroitic cemeteries, the 1960s UNESCO campaign to rescue Nubian monuments threatened by the construction of the Aswan Dam, and excavations at the Giza Pyramids and sites in Nubia. "[Professor Simpson] served the monuments of Egypt... with unstinting passion," noted fellow scholar Hussein Bassir. "He served as a major channel between Egypt and the US," Bassir added, "to the benefit of the two nations and the archaeological and cultural ties between the two countries."

#### Reference:

1. This information on Jai Singh's life, military career and facial features has been compiled by notes prepared by John Seyller, gleaned from the *Artibus Asiae* article by Catherine Glynn and Ellen Smart and from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jai\\_Singh\\_I](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jai_Singh_I)





# A PRINCE AND A HOLY MAN MEET IN A LANDSCAPE

INDIA (MUGHAL), 1625-1650

FOLIO:

HEIGHT: 30.8 CM

WIDTH: 20.8 CM

DRAWING:

HEIGHT: 17.5 CM

WIDTH: 11.4 CM

Lightly coloured brush drawing in black ink with colour wash.

Laid down on card between orange and gold rules, the top and bottom of the album page mounted with large panels of nineteenth century *shikasteh* (broken calligraphy).

The *shikasteh* above the drawing is a hemistich (half a poetic line of verse) from a *qasidah* (ode) by the Qajar poet Qa'ani. In the *shikasteh* below is a hemistich from a *ghazal* (love poem) by Amir Khusraw.

The subject of this drawing, the meeting of a prince and a holy man, is a well-known theme in Mughal painting. Here, the prince is seated under a tree on a rocky outcrop, with his head humbly bowed, deep in conversation with the hermit outside the entrance to the wise man's cave. The ascetic sits in a meditative position with one knee raised, holding a holy book in his left hand and in his right, a string of meditation beads (*rudrakshamala*) made from the seeds of the evergreen broad-leaved tree *Elaeocarpus ganitrus*.

From the way his *jama* is tied under his right arm and the simple decoration of plain lappets on his restrained attire, we can tell that the Mughal prince is clearly a Muslim. Devoid of princely symbols and weapons as he seeks spiritual guidance, his only jewellery is a modest *haldili* (pendant or amulet),

normally carved with religious inscriptions. The holy man is by contrast a Hindu Brahmin and probably Shaivite as indicated by his *rudrakshamala* beads. Rudra is one of Shiva's epithets and *rudraksha* in Sanskrit means "Shiva's teardrops". The ascetic in this drawing is depicted larger than the prince, showing him to be the focus of the composition and his wisdom the goal of the prince's visit. The promontory they both share may be read as a dais or throne.

The prince has not completely left behind his symbols of rank and station. Though he is plainly dressed before the ascetic, the entourage accompanying him is large. Standing respectfully at a slight distance and at a lower level are his guards, horses, horsemen and musicians carrying a *sitar* and a bowed fiddle. Courtiers carry his *talwar* sword in its scabbard and his bow and quiver full of arrows, all plainly but nevertheless ceremonially wrapped in cloth. On the left are two elephants with *mahouts* (drivers) carrying *ankuses* (elephant goads).

Princes seeking the counsel of sages and mystics are a constantly recurrent theme of Mughal art, examples of which can be seen in many museum collections and publications. In our 2016 Simon Ray *Indian & Islamic Works of Art* catalogue, pp. 104-107, cat. no. 44, we published a Mughal drawing of "A Prince Visiting an Ascetic" from circa 1610, which is one of the earliest full-scale treatments of the theme. This is now in the David Collection, Copenhagen.

The present drawing has similarities of composition with an earlier, well-known painting from the Akbari period attributed to 'Abd al-Samad though falsely ascribed to Mir Sayyid Ali, "A prince visiting a hermit", circa

1585-1590, now in the collection of Prince and Princess Sadruddin Aga Khan. This is published in B. N. Goswamy and Eberhard Fischer, *Wunder einer goldenen Zeit: Malerei am Hof der Moghul-Kaiser: indische Kunst des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts aus Schweizer Sammlungen*, 1987, no. 14; and in Sheila R. Canby, *Princes, Poets & Paladins: Islamic and Indian paintings from the collection of Prince and Princess Sadruddin Aga Khan*, 1998, pp. 110-112, cat. no. 81. It is possible that the artist of the present work was aware of this celebrated painting and used it as a prototype for this drawing.

According to Canby, the theme of encounters between noble or princely figures and holy men in Mughal painting first emerged during the reign of Akbar. As Akbar took control of more of the Indian subcontinent and came to rule increasing numbers of non-Muslims, he became acutely aware of the need for religious tolerance and for ways to demonstrate his openness. The present drawing continues to express his view that rulers need spiritual guidance and that such wisdom can be found from many different sources.

Provenance:

Sotheby's, London, 25th March 1987, lot 2  
The Collection of Dr Jerome and Dr Evelyn Oremland

Dr Jerome D. Oremland was a noted San Francisco Bay Area psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, art collector and author of many books including a novel, *The Man Who Killed Caravaggio* and *The Man in Nagasaki: Memories and Other Recollections*, both written from the viewpoint of a psychiatrist. His wife Dr Evelyn K. Oremland was a Mills College professor and expert on the psychological effects of illness on children. The Oremlands lived in Sausalito, Marin County.























## RAMPAGING ELEPHANTS

IRAN (SAFAVID, ISFAHAN), 1680-1700

SCHOOL OF MUHAMMAD ZAMAN

HEIGHT: 17.7 CM

WIDTH: 22.4 CM

Opaque watercolour heightened with gold on paper.

Inscribed with the name of the painter Muhammad Zaman in the sky above.

Mounted on an album page within dark blue and gold floral borders. On the verso is an eighteenth century sheet of black *shikasteh* (broken calligraphy) written on a buff ground within salmon and blue borders with gold floral designs.

In this dynamic painting of the popular Indian theme of rampaging elephants restrained by their *mahouts* (drivers), set within a Europeanised landscape that recedes into the far distance, a superb artist of the school of the famous Safavid painter Muhammad Zaman (active 1649-1700) has created an electrifying scene full of excitement and converging movement as the weighty elephants crash at speed into each other at the lower centre of the painting. The uncontrollable nature of beasts gone amok is brilliantly conveyed by tethers and ropes unwinding from their bodies,

bells and tassels flying in the wind, *mahouts* clinging on desperately to the backs of the elephants, and one of the *mahouts* having lost his turban, a conventional symbol by which the dangers of riding a charging berserk animal are depicted. Men with long spears prod the elephants in an effort to control them but this seems only to increase their fury.

In contrast to the violence of the central scene, the landscape is harmonious and idyllic in conception. To the lower right is a waterfall emerging from the rocks upon which a tree with luxuriant branches grows into the sky. Rocky outcrops, hills and mountains of ever increasing height and lighter colour recede into the far distance by layering the motifs under a sky that gradually pales with atmospheric perspective. Hunters standing on a promontory look on calmly with little sense of alarm while the mansions nestling in the hillside in the mid ground, drawn with perspective so as to occupy three-dimensional volume within an estimable distance, seem silent and oblivious to the foreground action.

Scenes of elephant combat with struggling *mahouts* were popular in Mughal art and that of Jaipur. The subject was especially prevalent in the early seventeenth century when elephant fights were amongst the most popular forms of royal entertainment. A Mughal painting of "Elephants Fighting" is illustrated in Andrew Topsfield, *Visions of Mughal India: The Collection of Howard Hodgkin*, 2012, pp. 44-45, cat. no. 11.

Our painting is a unique example of the genre produced by the school of Muhammad Zaman in the late seventeenth century. Although the work has been attributed to Muhammad Zaman by the small black inscription above the elephants, it is more likely that the work was done by an artist working

closely in his style. The theatrical depiction of the elephants is executed by an extremely fine and masterly hand. Drawing the viewer into the painting is the use of shading to create depth, and the careful placement of the figures in colourful Mughal dress within a definable space. Note the way in which the limbs of the *mahouts* inflate their sleeves and trousers from within to create a fullness of figure to impart a sense of weight. The carefully modelled bodies of the elephants feel ponderous, heavy and well able to crush and trample a *mahout* underfoot. The convergence of the elephants at the lower centre of the painting brings the point of gravity low.

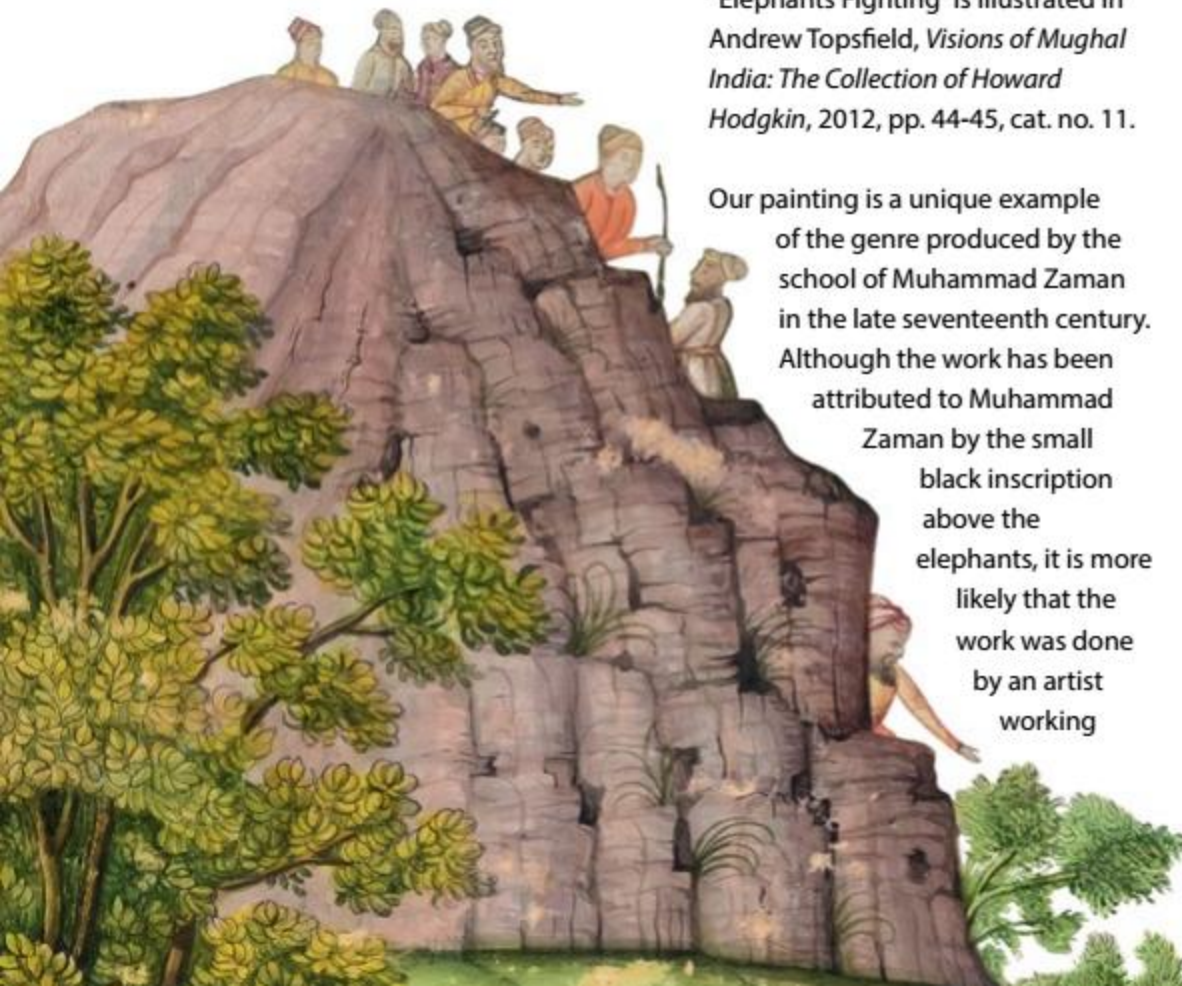
From the close attention to details which characterise paintings done by Zaman, such as the background with the inclusion of a broken tree trunk, the attempt to re-create the various tree types, the vivid and lively use of colours and some common facial features in the figures, it is evident that the work was done by an experienced painter and a close follower of Zaman, with a strong possibility of Zaman himself being involved in the execution.

The colours of the garments and the faces of the *mahouts* can be compared to a painting dated 1675 of "Bahram Gur Killing the Dragon" signed by Muhammad Zaman, which was a later addition to a copy of the *Khamsa* of Nizami at the British Library (Or. 2265, f.213r). This is published in Sheila R. Canby, *The Golden Age of Persian Art 1501-1722*, pp. 149-150, fig.140 with a detail on p. 145, fig. 34. According to Canby, Muhammad Zaman was a leading exponent of the Europeanising style at the court of Shah Sulayman (reigned 1666-1694). The early years of his career are not clearly understood as his first dated paintings of 1675-1676 are those of a mature artist. These include three illustrations added to the 1539-1545 British Museum *Khamsa* of Nizami, additions to the Chester Beatty *Shahnama*, and a painting of Venus

and Cupid based on an engraving by Raphael Sandeler. Canby notes Zaman's use of cast shadows and modelling as pictorial devices; puffy clouds and birds in the sky as in our painting; and drapery rendered with brightly lit folds separated from each other by dark crevasses. These all feature in our painting with the exception of cast shadows which are absent, signalling the intention of the artist to follow Mughal paintings, many of which do not have shadows.

In Sheila R. Canby, *Persian Painting*, 1993, pp. 112-113, no. 77, she publishes a circa 1670-1685 painting at the British Museum of "A prince on horseback with a courtier and servants" that she attributes to Zaman. Canby observes the use of highlights, shading and European modelling to depict folds and to suggest the forms of the bodies beneath the clothes worn by courtiers. The garments and saddlecloth of the prince are by contrast treated flatly, using ornament over form, to suggest his unbroken Safavid lineage and to set him apart stylistically from the courtiers.

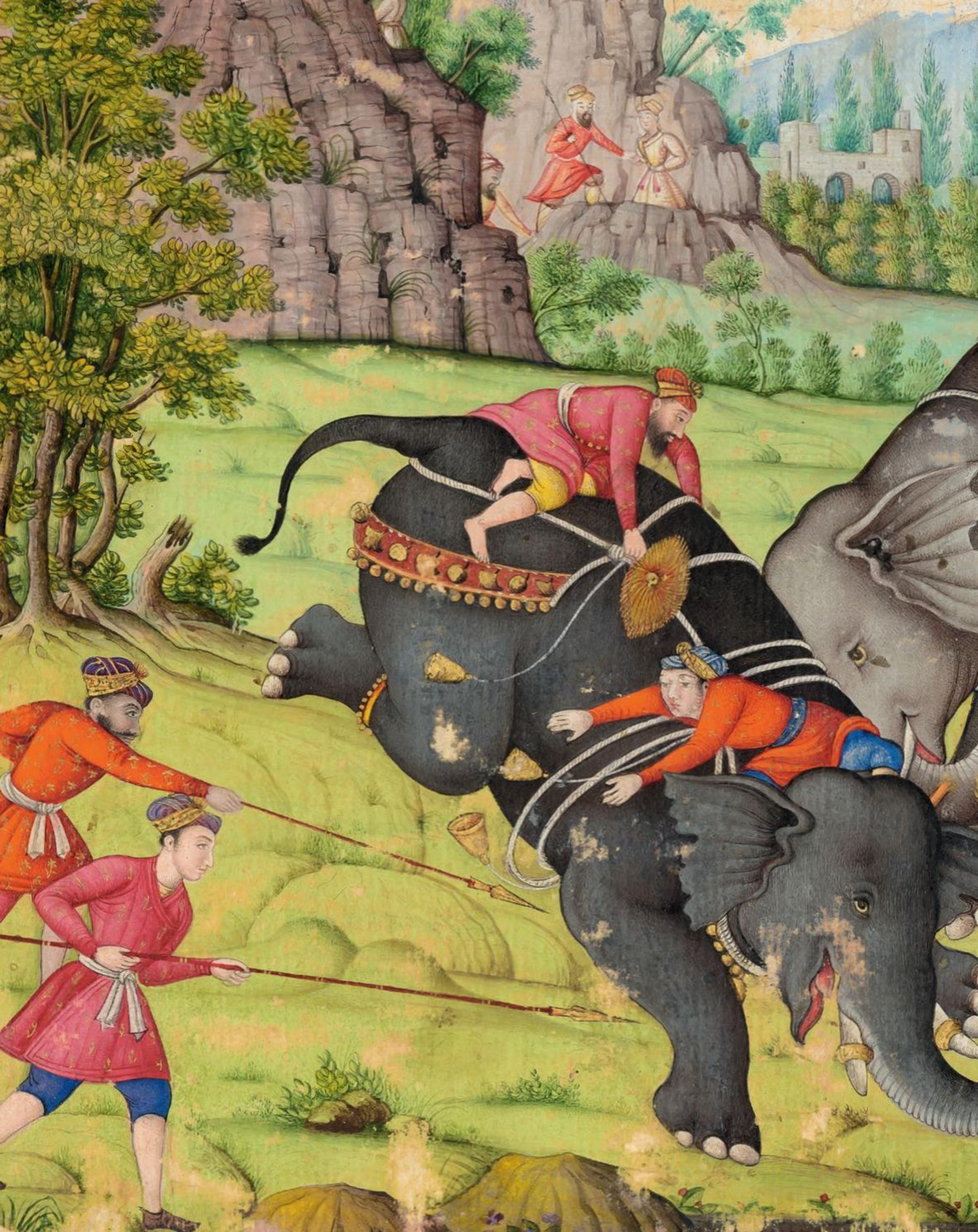
It was not uncommon to depict scenes of an Indian nature during this period, especially with increased mobility of artists and works of art. A pen box commissioned by Shah Sulayman is published in Layla S. Diba (ed.), *Royal Persian Paintings: The Qajar Epoch*, 1999, pp. 116-117. It features a prince attired in an Indian turban, supporting the argument that Zaman drew on both royal Mughal and Persian artistic traditions as well as European sources. A painting of the "Virgin and Child with John the Baptist" in the Asian Civilisations Museum, Singapore, is published in Alan Chong (ed.) with Pedro Moura Carvalho and Clement Onn et al, *Christianity in Asia: Sacred Art and Visual Splendour*, 2016, pp. 24-25, cat. no. 3. Here Zaman adopts a feathery technique consisting of tiny dots of pigment, different from his earlier styles, which Axel Langer believes to be derived from European enamel techniques.





















## GANESHA ENTHRONED

INDIA (MANDI), 1800-1820

ATTRIBUTED TO SAJNU

HEIGHT: 23.7 CM

WIDTH: 18 CM

Opaque watercolour heightened with gold on paper.

Inscribed on the verso with the number "545" within the Mandi Royal Collection stamp.

Conceived with superb proportions, the four-armed Lord Ganesha is enthroned within an opulent palace chamber. Unlike more common compositions where he is shown under an open sky, here the artist has captured an intimate scene with the single pious maiden satisfying the god's limitless appetite for all things sweet. Holding refreshment in a bejewelled gold *lota* (water vessel) in one hand, his steel *ankus* (elephant goad) in another and a string of pearls in the third, with his fourth hand Ganesha reaches for a delectable tray of *laddus* (sweets).

The layered perspective and finely detailed composition are hallmarks of the angular and elaborate style introduced to Mandi by the influential Pahari artist Sajnu, who was active between circa 1790 and 1830. Sajnu began working for Raja Isvari Sen of Mandi in 1808. As Isvari Sen's leading artist, Sajnu transformed the Mandi court style into one clearly influenced by Kangra and Guler painting though in a manner that replaces naturalism and simplicity with intricate decorative details: layers of ornate architecture and profuse but formally planted vegetation receding into the background; and lines of sight continually intercepted by further finely worked details.

Here the scene is framed by a cusped marble arch in the foreground and the far wall of the chamber is carved with *chini kana* niches. Ganesha's throne and the vermilion god himself obscure the view to the dense trees of the garden while his pearl-fringed gold parasol hides the upper portion of the rolled blind hanging over the doorway.

compare the treatment of the maiden, and the architectural elements found in a painting in the Victoria and Albert Museum illustrated on p. 277, no. 54 of the same book, and a page from a *Hamir Hath* series sold at Bonhams, New York, on 11th September 2012, lot 91.

Provenance:

Mandi Royal Collection  
German Private  
Collection, 1969

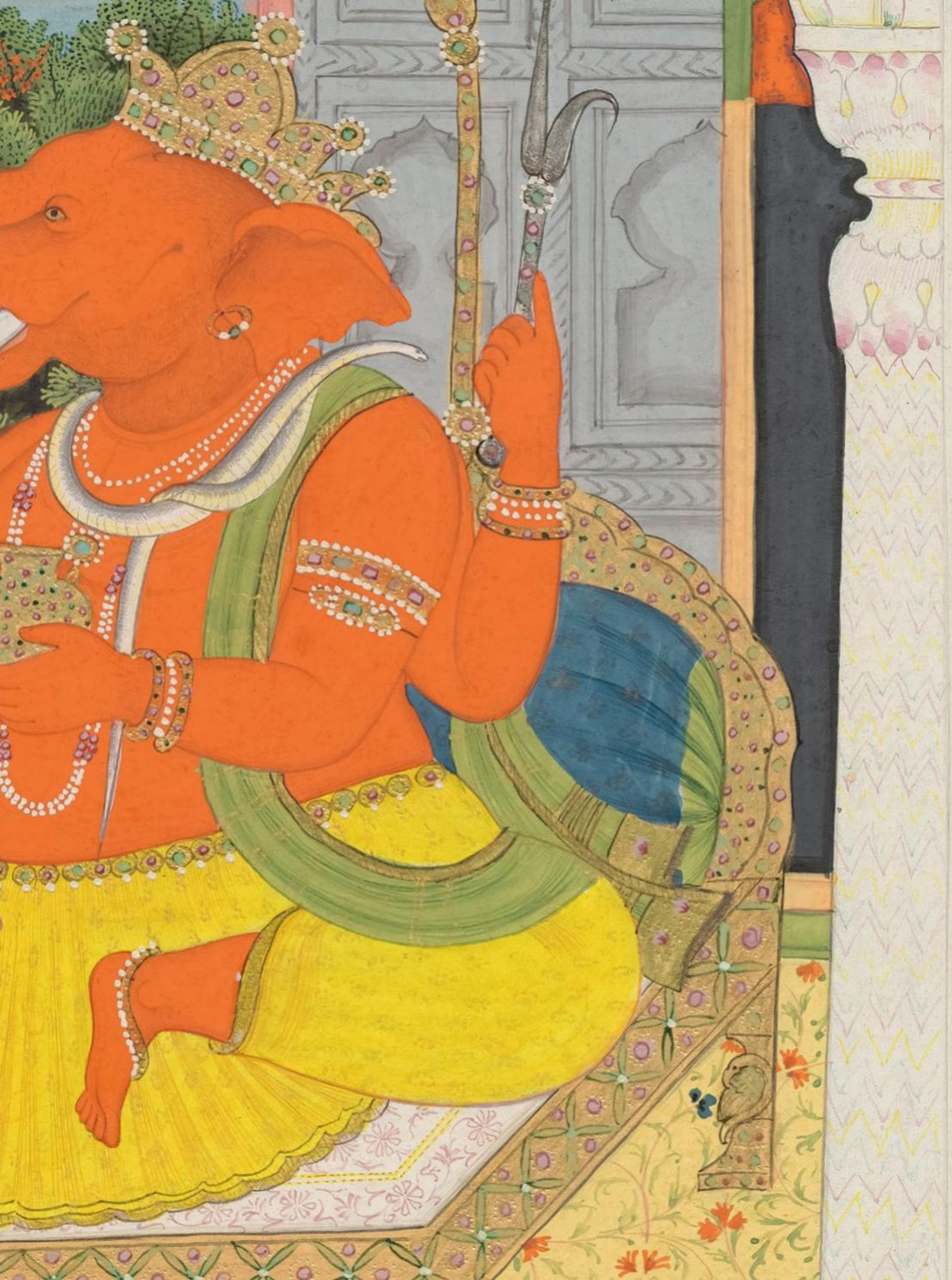
The delicate treatment of the lotus petals along the architrave and the chevron patterns on the tapering columns are also found on a *Barahmasa* (Songs of the Twelve Months) page depicting the month of Pus attributed to Sajnu in the Chandigarh Museum, published in W. G. Archer, *Indian Paintings from the Punjab Hills*, 1973, vol. II, p. 274, no. 44. Also













## WEDDING CELEBRATIONS OF A PRINCE

CENTRAL INDIA (DATIA), CIRCA 1770

HEIGHT: 22 CM

WIDTH: 24 CM

Opaque watercolour heightened with gold on paper.

An illustration to the *Sat Sai* of Bihari.

Inscribed in white *devanagari* to the top of the very dark blue border with the verse number "607" from the Datia recension of the *Sat Sai* of Bihari text. Further inscribed in black *devanagari* on the reverse with a different number "324" from another recension. In K. P. Bahadur's 1990 translation for Penguin Classics, it is given as verse 294 on pp. 154-155:

"What an elderly neighbour said:  
Young woman,  
why do you alone  
wander about lamenting  
when all others  
are lustily singing  
and gleefully making merry  
in your brother-in-law's wedding  
celebrations?  
Is it because  
you yourself are in love with him?"<sup>1</sup>

The *Sat Sai* or "Seven Hundred" couplets (1662) by Bihari Lal is a Hindi poem that presents a series of the states of lovers like the *Rasikapriya* of Keshav Das (1581). Although some of the couplets of the poem are in praise of Krishna, other parts refer to unidentified lovers.<sup>1</sup> The collection of miscellaneous verses by Bihari have been grouped together by various commentators and translators under different heads. This verse comes under the head of "The Other Woman" or, as translated by Bahadur, "Another Woman". A reading of the verse and the clarity of the painting's narrative structure express the dilemma of the other woman's position as she watches the wedding of her secret lover.

The wedding celebrations of the prince take place in front of the saffron festooned arcade of a white marble palace. The seated groom is

dressed in a saffron robe and wears an elaborate jewelled crown on his head which he smilingly adjusts as he awaits the appearance of the bride. Seated in front of him are the ladies of the court, bustling with gossip and happy activity. Though it is unclear, the smiling lady seated directly in front him on his carpet may be his bride. However, it is more likely that she is a prominent relative assisting in the organisation of the celebrations as a bride would be elaborately dressed in wedding finery and differentiated from the other women.

Behind the prince stand three ladies also evidently enjoying the occasion. One of them turns to the lone figure standing on the far left with arms crossed who fingers the edge of her shawl. She is the heroine of the verse. Unlike the others, who "are lustily singing and gleefully making merry in your brother-in-law's wedding celebrations", she alone "wanders around lamenting".

Outside the red wall of the palace courtyard, musicians have gathered to provide raucous accompaniment to the festive occasion. The musicians assembled outside the gateway are characteristic of those summoned for wedding festivities. They include the classic combination of the *shehnai*, an Indian oboe with a double reed at one end and a flared wooden bell on the other, and a pair of *naqqara* or kettle drums. The sound of the *shehnai* is considered auspicious and thus widely used during marriages, processions and temples.

Next to the prince's palanquin is a very large version of the *shehnai*, known in southern India as the *nadaswaram*, the world's loudest non-brass acoustic instrument, with a hardwood body and a large flaring bell made of wood or metal. It is also considered very auspicious and is the key instrument played at all Hindu marriages.

Completing the woodwind ensemble is an S-shaped *sringa*, a type of Indian

horn. Cymbals and small drums reinforce the percussion section.

According to Stuart Cary Welch and Milo Cleveland Beach, Datia in Bundelkhand, the eastern region of Central India, was granted as a fief to Bhagwan Rao, the son of Birsingh Deo of Orchha, in 1626. A *Ragamala* of the early eighteenth century may be from here, while inscribed works are known from the reign of Rao Indrajit, which combine Mughal with earlier Central Indian traditions. Portraits of Rao Shatrughit (1762-1802) during whose reign the present painting was most probably executed, are found in N. C. Mehta, *Studies in Indian Painting*, 1928.<sup>2</sup>

For other examples of this *Sat Sai* series, see Stella Kramrisch, *Painted Delight: Indian Paintings from Philadelphia Collections*, 1986, pp. 102 and 178, no. 95; Stanislaw Czuma, *Indian Art from the George P. Bickford Collection*, 1975, no. 75; and Stuart Cary Welch and Milo Cleveland Beach, *Gods, Thrones and Peacocks*, 1965, no. 43. For a painting from a closely related, earlier *Sat Sai* series, dating to circa 1750, see W. G. Archer and Edwin E. Binney, 3rd, *Rajput Miniatures from the collection of Edwin Binney, 3rd*, 1968, p. 65, no. 50.

The series is discussed in Konrad Seitz, *Orchha, Datia, Panna: Miniaturen von den rajputischen Höfen Bundelkhands 1580-1820*, *Sammlung Eva und Konrad Seitz*, vol. II, 2015, nos. 59.1-59.10 and p. 222.

## Provenance:

Private collection, London, formed between the late 1940s and the late 1960s.

## Acknowledgement:

We are grateful to Jerry Losty for his expert advice and kind reading of the inscription.

## References:

1. The translation given here is taken from Krishna P. Bahadur in the Penguin Classics edition of Bihari: *The Satasai: Seven Hundred Love Poems*, 1990, verse 294 on pp. 154-155.
2. Stuart Cary Welch and Milo Cleveland Beach, *Gods, Thrones and Peacocks*, 1965, p. 121, no. 38.

॥दह॥औरसवे  
॥६०७॥उक्तिनाइ





रषीहसतिगावतिभरींउष्णह॥तुहीवहविलषीकहाकाहिदेवरकेव्यांह  
ककीभौजाडीकीनाइकासौनाइकापरकिपाञ्चलंकारउष्णस॥













# **KRISHNA ATTACKED BY DHENUKASURA AS HIS COMPANIONS GATHER FRUIT**

INDIA (BASOHLI), 1760-1765

ATTRIBUTED TO FATTU  
(CIRCA 1725-1790), THE ELDEST SON  
OF MANAKU

HEIGHT: 30.8 CM  
WIDTH: 39.8 CM

Opaque watercolour heightened  
with gold on paper.

An illustration from a *Bhagavata  
Purana* series.

The donkey demon, Dhenukasura, kicks Krishna furiously with his hind legs as he shakes the fruit off palm trees (*tala*) in the palmyra grove (*talavana*). Balarama calmly raises his arm at the approaching donkeys while *gopas* (cowherds) rush to gather the fallen fruit.

On the *verso* are two lines of *takri* and three lines of *devanagari* describing the scene, using two verses from the fifteenth Canto of the Tenth Book of the *Bhagavata Purana*:

"Hearing the words of their dear companions, Krishna and Balarama laughed and, desiring to please them, set off for the Talavana surrounded by their cowherd boyfriends." (10.15.27)

"The powerful demon rushed up to Lord Baladeva and sharply struck the Lord's chest with the hooves of his hind legs. Then Dhenuka began to run about, braying loudly." (10.15.30)

The verses are *Bhagavata Purana*, Book X, chapter 15, verses 27 and 30. This series has selected or condensed verses written on the reverse and not the complete text. Verses in *devanagari* are frequently accompanied as here by *takri* versions of the story.

The famous story of the donkey demons in the palmyra grove takes

place when young Krishna first reaches the *pauganda* stage of boyhood between the ages of six and nine. While Balarama is generally acknowledged to be the hero of this episode, as it is Balarama not Krishna whom Dhenukasura kicks in verse 30, and he who kills the demon in verse 32 by whirling him into a tree, the artist of this illustration has chosen to depict Krishna as the central focus.<sup>1</sup>

The setting is a dark and mysterious forest in Vrindavan. As the twilight sky darkens from blue to a foreboding grey, and the scattered shrubs covering the ground become barely discernible through the shadows, Balarama, Krishna and the cowherds gather the fallen fruit of the palmyra trees. It is the *gopa* Sridama who first tells his friends of a huge forest with rows of palm trees and abundant fallen fruit, fiercely guarded by the evil demon Dhenukasura who has taken the form of a donkey and surrounded himself with kinsmen of equal strength. So terrifying are the demon donkeys that no humans, cows or even birds dare to penetrate the forest.

Yet the golden yellow fruits are so fragrant and their wafting scent so all-pervasive that the *gopas* are intoxicated with a desire to eat the fruit and beg the two Lords to lead the way. It is Balarama who enters first and with the strength of an elephant, shakes the trees to loosen the fruit. Enraged by the sound of dropping fruit and trespassers encroaching on his territory, Dhenukasura rushes like thunder and quaking earth towards Balarama, and rump-first, kicks him on the chest with his hind legs.<sup>2</sup> Using just one hand, Balarama picks him up by his hind legs, and whirls him so vigorously that he dies while being spun.<sup>3</sup> Then Balarama throws him onto the top of a great palmyra tree, which shakes so much that the whole grove trembles and fruits rain down









to the delight of the boys. Seeing their leader fallen, the donkey horde rushes toward Krishna and Balarama who effortlessly pick them and hurl them one by one into the trees.<sup>4</sup> Soon the ground is covered with a pile of dead demon bodies and the forest freed at last from their reign of terror. In this painting the upright tree trunks form a parallel grid through which the action speeds.

This illustration is part of the large Guler-Basohli *Bhagavata Purana* series that is called by W. G. Archer the "fifth Basohli *Bhagavata Purana*". According to Darielle Mason, who publishes another folio in *Intimate Worlds: Indian Paintings from the Alvin O. Bellak Collection*, 2001, pp. 188-189, cat. no. 80, over thirty pages have been published although the series contained many more. One of the pages now in the Edwin Binney, 3rd Collection at the San Diego Museum of Art, bears the date 1769, and it is by this date that many scholars date the series.<sup>5</sup> However, because this date appears not as part of a colophon but in the middle of a narrative sequence, some scholars including Archer prefer to date the series slightly earlier (1760-1765), others slightly later (1770-1780), though the earlier dating of this transitional series is more convincing stylistically.<sup>6</sup>

The compositions, choice of narrative moments, and style of this series are undoubtedly based on the extensive set of *Bhagavata Purana* paintings and drawings of circa 1740 attributed to Manaku.<sup>7</sup> The series is large and though the basis of the style is derived from Manaku, it displays a great variety of styles and is pivotal in the development of the distinctive Pahari style that reached

its apogee in the late eighteenth century. The stylistic transition is from the vivid clarity of the early Basohli style to the delicate idealism of paintings at Guler and Kangra.<sup>8</sup> In his recent writings, B. N. Goswamy attributes the bulk of the images in the series to Fattu, the eldest son of Manaku, who during its production came more and more under the influence of Nainsukh.<sup>9</sup>

The majority of this set was once in the collection of Mrs F. K. Smith, sold at Sotheby's, London on 1st February 1960. It is now widely dispersed amongst various public and private collections. The paintings all bear inscriptions on the reverse in *takri* and *devanagari* describing the illustrations. Some have red borders with black rules, others with black and double white rules. The image and border sizes vary. The earlier folios like ours have images measuring approximately 23 x 33 cm and the later folios, slightly larger images.

Listed as lot 11 on p. 4 of the Sotheby's *Catalogue of Important Western and Oriental Miniatures and Manuscripts*, 1960, is the companion painting to ours, "Krishna and Balarama slay the ass-demons", which concludes the narrative of this great adventure. Mrs F. K. Smith did not previously own

the present painting as it is not listed as part of her large collection offered through the catalogue. However, knowledge of her painting combined with ours demonstrates that in this series important episodes were depicted over multiple illustrations in the manner of a graphic novel.

#### Provenance:

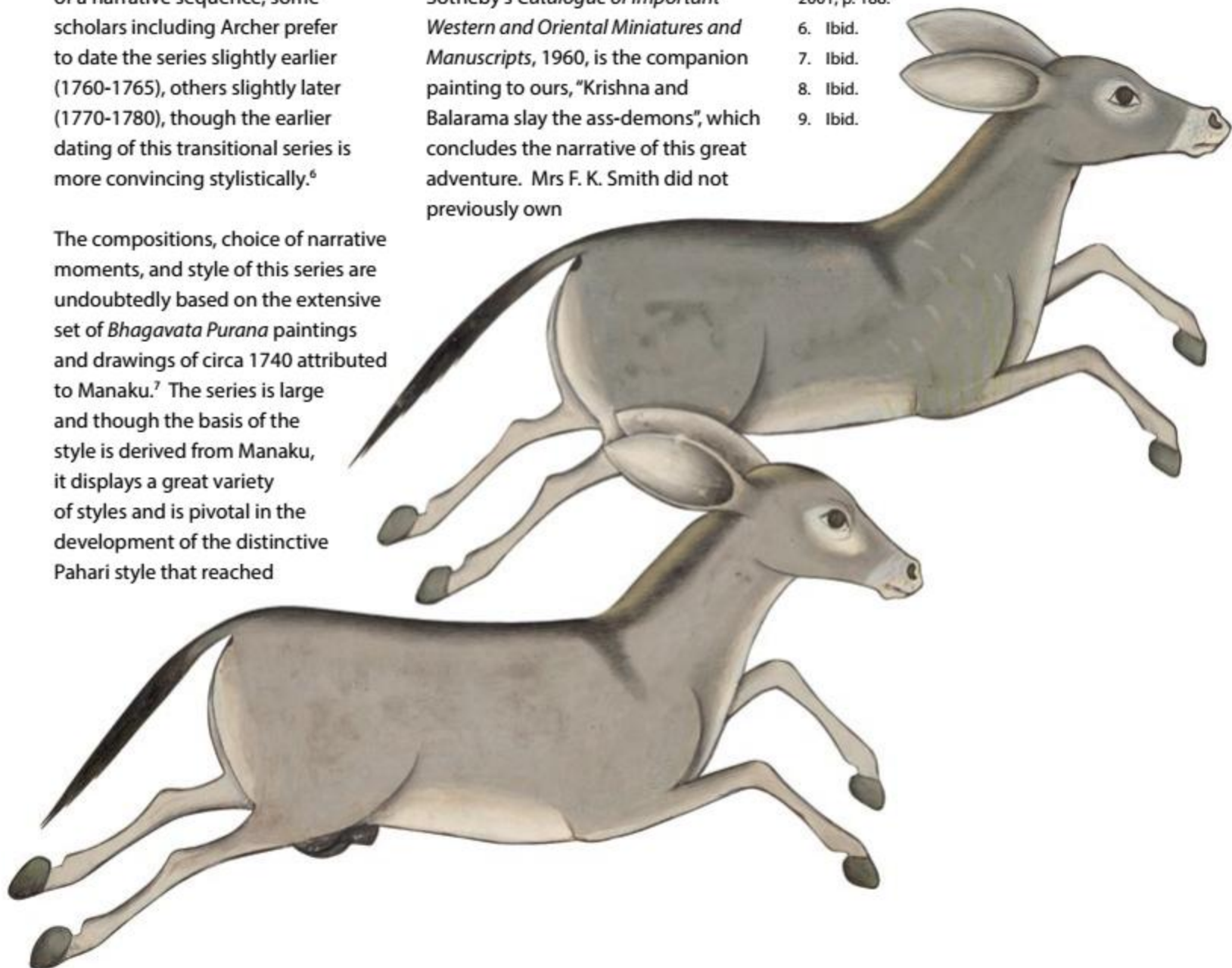
Professor William Kelly Simpson

#### Acknowledgement:

We would like to thank Jerry Losty for his expert advice and kind reading of the inscriptions.

#### References:

1. The story given here is taken from B. N. Goswamy and Anna L. Dallapiccola, *Krishna: The Divine Lover*, 1982, pp. 44-45; and Edwin F. Bryant (trans.), *Krishna: The Beautiful Legend of God (Srimad Bhagavata Purana, Book X)*, 2003, chapter 15, pp. 19-24, verses 20-40.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Darielle Mason, *Intimate Worlds: Indian Paintings from the Alvin O. Bellak Collection*, 2001, p. 188.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.









## THE DEATH OF THE DEMON PRALAMBA

INDIA (BILASPUR), 1770-1780

HEIGHT: 31.3 CM

WIDTH: 38.7 CM

Opaque watercolour heightened with gold on paper.

An illustration from a *Bhagavata Purana* series.

With his head coming to rest against an outcrop of craggy rocks, his eyes closed and his face contorted with the agony of death throes, a demon in the lower right vomits blood as cowherd boys led by Balarama beat his fallen body with sticks. Krishna watches from the left, seated under a tree in regal repose as he leans against a large white bolster-like cow, its legs tucked under the body like a resting Nandi bull. Krishna wears a striped yellow robe and shawl, a long garland of flowers and a peacock crown. Balarama and the *gopas* (cowherds) are dressed in short drawers tied with floral *patkas* (sashes).

Other cows and calves stand placidly by, rooted in paralysis, or run away in fear, panicked by the sudden turn of events and the demon's terrifying appearance. Some of the cows have unusual colours and patterns that heighten the emotional

charge of the scene: a yellow cow with a spotted hide like a leopard, and cows with swirling blue, black and white marbling streaked with gold. The scene takes place in a wooded riverbank shaded by ancient trees with clustered leaves, gnarled or stumpy trunks and zigzag moss-covered roots. A river with a zigzag bank cuts across the right foreground. Puffs of cloud streaked with gold roll through the blue sky.

Without an inscription, it is difficult to identify precisely the incident from Krishna's life that this painting depicts yet the forest setting and the vomiting of blood by the demon fit in well with the death of Pralamba, who is killed by a powerful blow from Balarama as the cowherds play in the forest (*Bhagavata Purana*, Book X, chapter 18). The incident takes place at the height of summer. To escape the intense heat, Krishna, Balarama and the *gopas* bring their herd to the forest. Because of the special features of Vrindavan, the forest always exhibits the qualities of spring.<sup>1</sup> There are abundant pastures shaded by trees and cooled by spray from waterfalls and breezes from the waves of brooks and streams. Here the boys play games that include hide and seek, leap-frog, blind man's bluff and piggyback.<sup>2</sup>

A demon named Pralamba assumes the guise of a cowherd and joins the group with the intention of seizing

Krishna and Balarama. Although Krishna knows who the demon really is, he welcomes him into their fellowship, all the while considering how to exterminate him. He divides the *gopas* into two teams, one led by him and the other by Balarama, and organises games in which the losers must carry the winners on their backs. Pralamba joins Krishna's side; they lose and have to carry Balarama's victorious team.<sup>3</sup>

Pralamba takes Balarama and spirits him far beyond the perimeter of the grazing herd. In response to his abduction, Balarama begins to increase his weight till it equals that of Mount Meru, making it impossible for Pralamba to proceed any further. Pralamba's disguise collapses under the strain and he reveals his true form, with blazing eyes, furrowed brow, ferocious teeth and hair of fire, glittering with gold and jewels. As he begins to ascend into the sky, Balarama strikes him with a shattering blow to the head and the demon falls to earth with a terrifying roar, vomits blood, falls unconscious and dies.<sup>4</sup>

The *Bhagavata Purana* series to which this picture belongs was once owned by the family of a Bilaspur nobleman, Thakur Ishwari Singh Chandela, later a resident of Udaipur, who sold most of the pictures to the Russian painter and collector, Svetoslav Roerich. Chandela states on the basis of family tradition that the series is the work of Bilaspur painters at Bilaspur.<sup>5</sup>

Two sequential paintings from the series, depicting similar scenes of cows grazing in the forest and Krishna killing the crane demon Bakasura, are published in

W. G. Archer, *Indian Paintings from the Punjab Hills*, 1973, vol. I, pp. 241-242, Kahlur (Bilaspur) 46(i-ii); vol. II, pp. 188-189, pls. 46(i-ii).

The present painting, which belonged to Dr William K. Ehrenfeld, is published in Daniel J. Ehnborn, *Indian Miniatures: The Ehrenfeld Collection*, 1985, pp. 216-217, cat. no. 107.

Our painting and the crane demon scenes published by Archer share numerous stylistic affinities that link them to each other, and the whole series to the Bilaspur tradition. Archer notes the inclusion of brindled and dotted cows; figures with square-shaped heads and large pupils set in the corner of the eyes; the zigzag treatment of the water; trees with dramatically gouged-out holes; all set against pale blue skies and landscapes dominated by olive brown tones. He further notes the preference for hard brusque forms and clear narrative statements.<sup>6</sup>

Archer also points out the strong influence of mid eighteenth century Mewar painting, seen in the angular river banks; the sombre colours used for the background; the stiff explosive movement of the figures with jerky rhythms; and the landscape conventions, in particular clusters of leaves like the clawing fingers of a hand, which can be seen to the lower right corner of our painting.<sup>7</sup>

Archer, sensing a far stronger Mewar influence on this series than in other Bilaspur miniatures, theorises that a *Bhagavata Purana* series may have been borrowed from Mewar as a model during a period of strained relations between Bilaspur and Kangra, where the Krishna cult had long been deeply rooted.<sup>8</sup> Ehnborn acknowledges the evident similarities but argues that it is difficult to assess their true meaning. He suggests that the independent development of common sources may account for the similarities or the affinities may simply be coincidental. Conventions that reappear in different styles and periods of Indian painting do not necessarily indicate direct contact between separate idioms.<sup>9</sup> Though the underlying stylistic influences may ultimately elude the analysis of scholars and must remain conjectural, the resultant vitality and distinctiveness of this splendid *Bhagavata Purana* series cannot be denied.







Provenance:  
The William K. Ehrenfeld Collection

Exhibited and Published:  
Daniel J. Ehnborn, with essays by Robert Skelton and Pramod Chandra, *Indian Miniatures: The Ehrenfeld Collection*, 1985, pp. 216-217, cat. no. 107. This is the catalogue for the exhibition organised by the American Federation of Arts as part of the "Festival of India" in the United States during 1985

and 1986. The opening presentation of the exhibition was held at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor in San Francisco.

References:  
1. B. N. Goswamy and Anna L. Dallapiccola, *Krishna the Divine Lover: Myth and Legend through Indian Art*, 1982, pp. 75-76; Edwin F. Bryant (trans.), *Krishna: The Beautiful Legend of God (Srimad Bhagavata Purana, Book X)*, 2003, chapter 18, pp. 91-94.

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. W. G. Archer, *Indian Paintings from the Punjab Hills*, 1973, vol. I, pp. 241-242.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Daniel J. Ehnborn, with Essays by Robert Skelton and Pramod Chandra, *Indian Miniatures: The Ehrenfeld Collection*, 1985, p. 216.











# MAHARANA ARI SINGH SEATED AT NIGHT ON THE TERRACE OF THE CHINI RI CHITRASALI

INDIA (UDAIPUR), DATED 1764

BY SHIVA

HEIGHT: 62 CM

WIDTH: 48 CM

Opaque watercolour heightened with gold on paper.

In this wonderfully atmospheric painting, Maharana Ari Singh (reigned 1761-1773) is seated at night with attendant courtiers on a carpeted terrace with gathering monsoon storm clouds and flashes of sinuous gold lightning in the dark sky above. The palace is decorated with blue-and-white Chinese export and Delft tiles. The lower apartment in the foreground of the miniature is the

Surya Mahal with its coloured sun relief, the emblem of the Sisodiya Rajputs' solar ancestry.

The courtiers are identified by a *devanagari* inscription on the reverse:

*sri/ramji/pano 1 sri maharajadhiraja maharanaji sri arasihaji ri surat sriji citrasali upali me birajya thaka itra sardar hajur betha thaka dhaabjo? nagaji dhaabhai rupaji caran? manji ra so keto thako sama bhai beta be..? thaka kako bagji kako durjan sikhji babo sagat sikhji surat sikhji kubar jalo ude sikhji (in another hand:) citra siva ro ki do so ori jama samat 1820 ra phagan vid 2 mhe jma.*

The courtiers present are the Dhabhais (royal foster brothers) Nagaji and Rupji, Charan(?) Manji, also Baghji (a royal uncle), Durjan Singh, Sagat Singh, Surat Singh and Jhala Udai Singh. The inscription also tells us the name of the artist, Shiva, and gives the date of the painting as *samvat* 1820/1764 AD. The original Mewar registration number is obscured but another library number "18" remains.

The nimbated Ari Singh leans against a large cushion and smokes a *hookah* held by a standing attendant while another fans him with a *morchal* (peacock feather fan). The scene is lit by candles placed on the floor or held by attendants. Seated in front of Ari Singh is a youth who may be his son, though this is unclear from the list of

names given by the inscription. An elaborate portable wooden screen, in front of which a small dog with a collar of bells and an enthusiastically wagging tale runs about in excitement, has been brought onto the terrace to form the sumptuous backdrop to the occasion. The theatrical setting for an evening of serene relaxation is the palace architecture itself, with the *chinoiserie* tiles in the background and the surrounding *jalis* of myriad designs.

According to Andrew Topsfield, the Chini ri Chitrasali or "Chinese Picture Hall" depicted in the upper portion of the picture is no longer extant. Dating from the reign of Jagat Singh II (1734-1751), it is sometimes referred to in inscriptions as Bari Chitrasali or the "Great Picture Hall", to distinguish it from the lower and earlier Chini ri Chitrasali that still survives, built by Sangram Singh II (reigned 1710-1734) and sometimes called Choti Chitrasali or the "Small Picture Hall". We can just make out the abundant variety of subjects on the tiles by their different configurations. With the blind above the doorway leading to the inner chamber of the pavilion rolled up, we can see the figures of two ladies in animated conversation, though at first glance the impression is that they are painted on the door itself.

Below the exotically decorated Chini ri Chitrasali is the Surya Mahal or "Sun Apartments", where the medallion orb in *basso-relievo* is flanked by walls set with frescoed dadoes and multi-coloured glass panels in cusped niches between elaborate fluted pillars. Beneath the nimbus is a fresco depicting elephants in combat. According to Topsfield, the Surya Mahal was already known as such in the time of Captain (later Lieutenant-Colonel) James Tod, the first British Political Agent and future historian of

Rajasthan, who resided in Udaipur from 1818 to 1822.<sup>1</sup> Tod describes the Surya Mahal in his *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, vol. I, p. 551 and describes in vol. II, p. 659 the solar symbol as "a huge painted sun of gypsum in high relief, with gilded rays".<sup>2</sup>

Compare Andrew Topsfield, *Paintings from Rajasthan in the National Gallery of Victoria*, 1980, p. 118, no.167, colour pl. 14 for a slightly later, similar subject by the artist Bhakta dated 1765.

A 1762 painting by Sahaji depicting "Maharana Ari Singh at Leisure with his Nobles in the Palace" has the same setting of the Chini ri Chitrasali above the Surya Mahal. This is illustrated in the Simon Ray *Indian & Islamic Works of Art* catalogue, 2015, pp. 110-115, cat. no. 48. Here Ari Singh is seen twice, once playing *chaupar* on the terrace and once in the hall below listening to music. These various examples show that these apartments were a favourite place for Ari Singh to relax in the evening.

## Provenance:

Mewar Royal Collection, inventory number 18  
Spink and Son, London, 1987  
Private English Collection 1994-2018

## Exhibited and published:

Spink and Son, London, *Indian & Islamic Works of Art*, Monday, 27th April to Friday 22nd May 1992, pp. 74-75, cat. no. 58.

## Acknowledgement:

We would like thank Andrew Topsfield for his expert advice and kind reading of the inscriptions.

## References:

1. Andrew Topsfield, *Paintings from Rajasthan in the National Gallery of Victoria*, 1980; p. 118.
2. Ibid. Tod's observations quoted by Topsfield are from James Tod (ed. W. Crooke), *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, vols. I and II, 1920, reprinted, 1971.







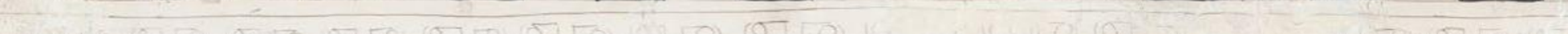
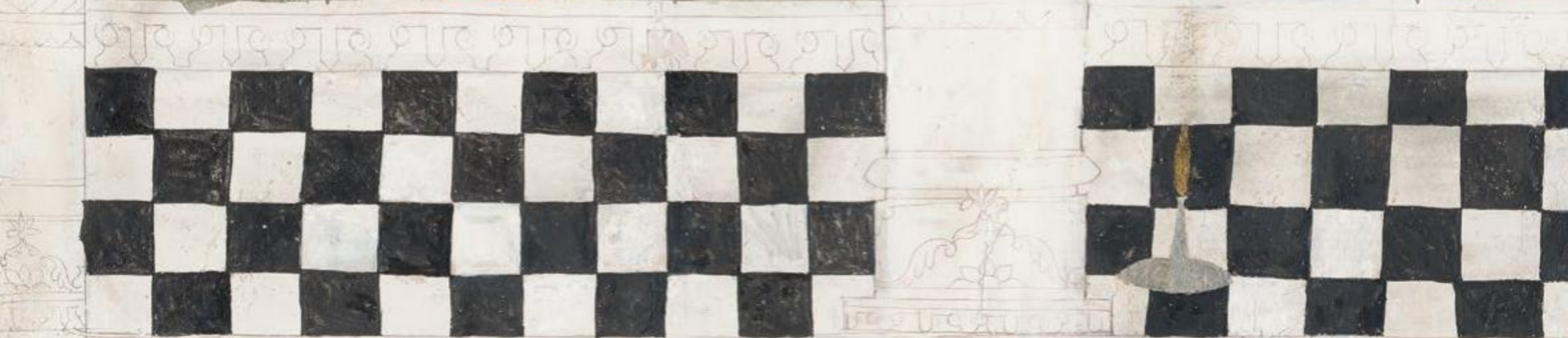
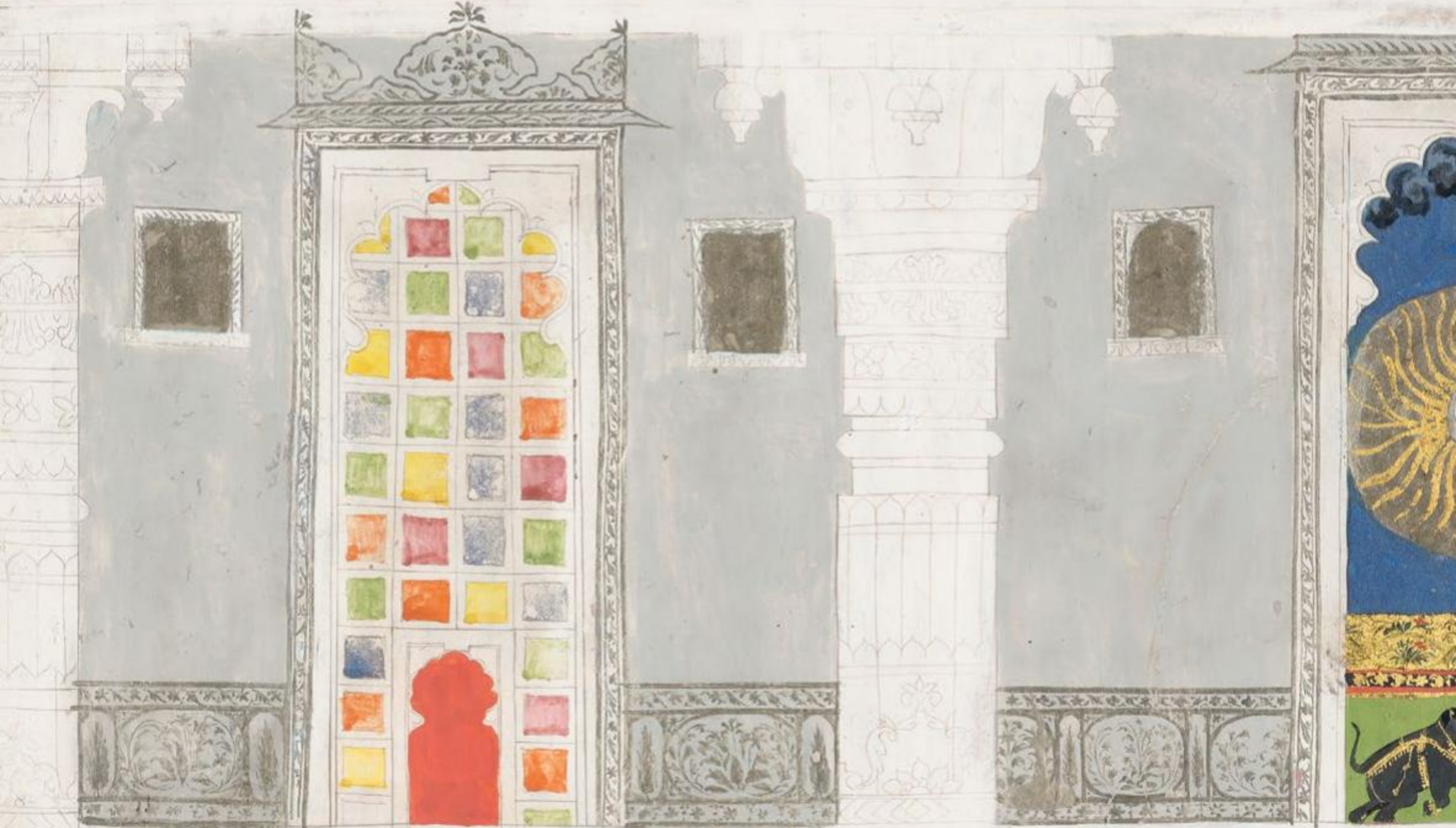
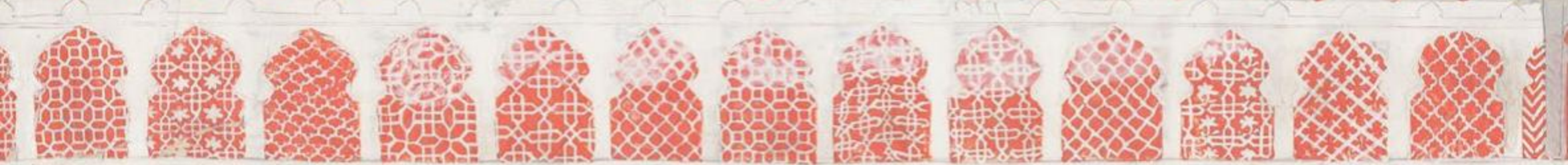






















# MAHARANA JAGAT SINGH HUNTING LEOPARD, DEER AND BEAR

INDIA (UDAIPUR), CIRCA 1890

HEIGHT: 32.8 CM

WIDTH: 43.2 CM

Opaque watercolour heightened with gold on paper within a blue border.

Inscribed in *devanagari* on the reverse with the subject of the painting.

The inscription tells us that this painting is a copy commissioned during the reign of Maharana Fateh Singh (1884-1930) though based on a painting dated 1749 (V.S. 1806) done during the reign of Maharana Jagat Singh (1734-1751). The original inscription from the 1749 painting is also copied; it names Jagat Singh's four principal companions on the hunt: Maharaja Nathji, Kanji, Thakur Sardar Singh and Baba Bharat Singh. These are the figures seen with Jagat Singh within the safety of the shooting platform (*odi*). Like Jagat Singh three of the courtiers use long rifles with clouds of smoke billowing from the ends of the barrels.

This dramatic painting depicts Jagat Singh with a nimbus, shooting leopard, deer and bear from the enclosure. Outside the enclosure are hunters driving animals towards the Rana by beating the bush with sticks, letting off flares and sounding musical instruments. The animals are contained by stone walls to the

centre and to the lower left, joined by a net held in place by posts and ropes. A wounded leopard attacks a hunter in a tree while another mauls a hunter on the ground below, the hunter's red turban loose beside him. A wounded bear with a bloodied forehead runs ferociously towards the Rana's enclosure on the left, while beyond the wall above the enclosure on the right writhe two injured gazelle. The surrounding vegetation is painted in great detail with the meticulous depiction of even single leaves.

Painting continued to flourish at the Mewar court in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. For a discussion of painting under Fateh Singh, see Andrew Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur: Art under the patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, 2002, pp. 275-293.

## Provenance:

Spink and Son, London, 1998

Private Swiss Collection, 1998-2017

## Published:

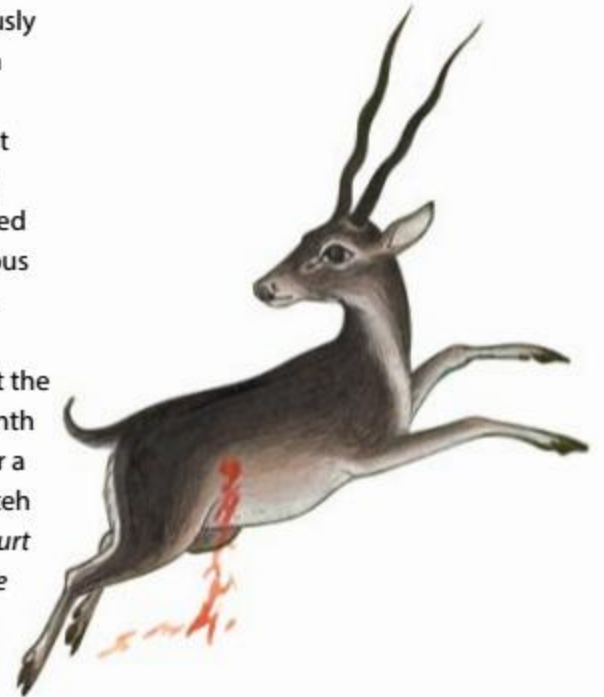
Spink, *Octagon*, Issue 3, Summer 1998, pp. 8-9.

## Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank Andrew Topsfield and Jerry Losty for their expert advice.

## Literature:

Andrew Topsfield, *The City Palace Museum Udaipur: Paintings of Mewar Court Life*, 1990.













## FLORAL MEDALLION AND ROSETTE SPRAYS

TURKEY (IZNIK), CIRCA 1575

DIAMETER: 30 CM

An underglaze-painted dish with a foliate rim in hues of cobalt blue and blue-grey against a white ground, with a design of scrolling flowers and tendrils surrounding a central composite rosette spray. The central field is framed by a breaking wave border to the rim.

The centre of the main field has a composite floral cartouche painted in greyish cobalt blue with a stylised eight-petalled rosette surrounded by larger overlapping teardrop and trefoil-shaped leaves, all framed to the edge by *fleur-de-lis* motifs. Set against a white slip ground, the medallion is framed to the cavetto by an arabesque meander of split-leaf palmettes and tendrils surrounding rosette sprays. The border has the common breaking wave motif, painted in cobalt and blue-grey hues. To the back of the dish is a painted foliate border to the edge framing alternating rosette sprays and motifs derived in design from Sanskrit.

This dish is from the same period and is very similar in colour and design to the "Wheatsheaf Style" Iznik ceramics,<sup>1</sup> lacking only the ears of wheat motifs which give the style its name. Rarely appearing on tiles, this style was popular up until the mid seventeenth century.<sup>2</sup> Made at the height of Iznik production, this dish has the more unusual palette of blue-and-white imitating closely the export porcelains of the Chinese Ming period from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Following Sultan Selim's conquests of Tabriz in 1514, and of Damascus and Cairo in 1517, large quantities of Chinese porcelain and celadons were acquired to adorn the court's rooms. Iznik potters therefore had access to a wide variety of designs, which had not been available to them before.

John Carswell

declares the colour of this Iznik group as "dark ultramarine blue", with another characteristic being the decorative use of "undulating stems with cloud-like petals".<sup>3</sup>

The Yuan dynasty in China used a "breaking wave" motif to the rim of their plates, seen here in a more stylised and expressive form.<sup>4</sup> To the Ottoman potter any mythological associations this motif may have had for the Chinese were unknown, but once attracted by its graphic power, it continued to be used well into the seventeenth century.<sup>5</sup> By the 1570s the wave border, increasingly removed from its Chinese model, had become a standard feature of Iznik dishes. In its final metamorphosis it became so stylised as to be

unrecognisable, to the point of being described as

"ammonite scrolls".<sup>6</sup> The very first Iznik examples however, imitate the Yuan waves closely, their rollers painted with feathery parallel lines. These gradual changes in this border motif allow us to accurately date the motifs on Iznik plates.

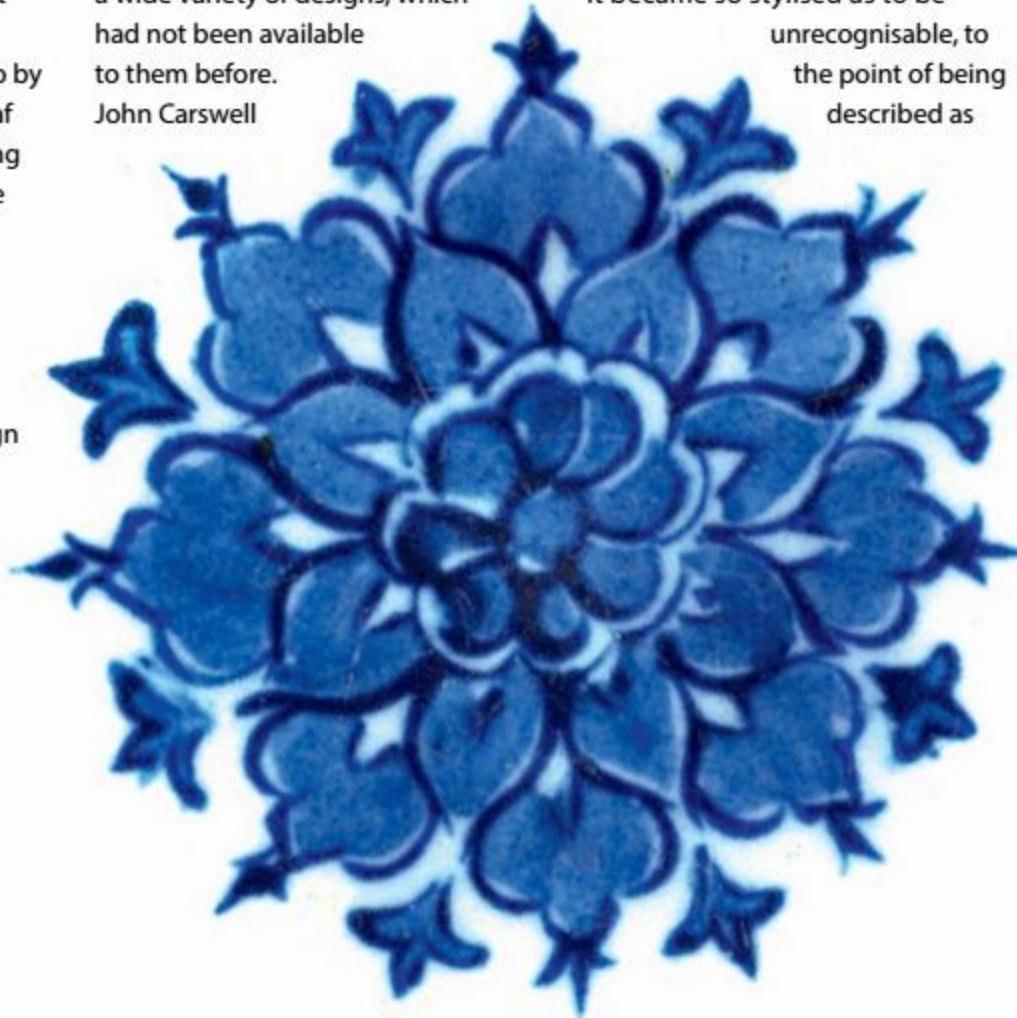
For ceramics with similar designs, see Frédéric Hitzel and Mireille Jacotin, *Iznik: L'aventure d'une collection: Les céramiques ottomanes du musée national de la Renaissance Château d'Écouen*, 2005, p. 343; Hülya Bilgi, *Iznik: The Ömer Koç Collection*, 2015, p. 235; Kjeld von Folsach, *Islamic Art: The David Collection*, 1990, p. 187; and Maria Queiroz Ribeiro, *Louças Iznik: Iznik Pottery*, 1996, p. 145.

Provenance:

Acquired from a Paris Antiques Dealer in 1980  
English Private Collection since 1980

References:

1. Nurhan Atasoy and Julian Raby, *Iznik: The Pottery of Ottoman Turkey*, 1989, p. 239.
2. Ibid.
3. John Carswell, *Iznik Pottery*, 1998, p. 85.
4. Ibid, p. 82.
5. Atasoy and Raby, 1989, p. 121.
6. Ibid.









## CARNATIONS AND TULIP SPRAYS

TURKEY (IZNIK), CIRCA 1580

DIAMETER: 29.7 CM

An underglaze-painted polychrome dish in colours of sealing wax red, cobalt blue and emerald green against a white slip ground, depicting a design of stylised floral sprays within a breaking wave border.

This dish has a foliate rim and a deep cavetto, and to the central field, a group of stylised floral sprays all emanate from a leafy mound. Two large single raised red tulips with emerald stems curve slightly inwards, framing five central carnations, again with sealing wax red flowers and green stems. Two smaller errant cobalt rosette sprays on fine black stems break up this group to the centre and a further two examples frame the field to the cavetto on the right as well as one to the left. A further single spray of rounded red buds also covers the left side of the cavetto. A thin cobalt foliate line surrounds the inner floral field, itself punctuated by small blue cloud bands to its inner edge. To the rim is a border of breaking wave motifs, sometimes referred to as "ammonite scrolls" or "snail shell curls". To the reverse of the dish, alternating trefoil leaves and single rosette sprays, all in a rich cobalt blue, decorate the underside of the cavetto.

The influence of early Chinese blue-and-white porcelain on this piece is clearly evident. The central design of floral sprays emerging from the cavetto can be traced back to the early Ming dynasty where similar sprays were depicted emerging from a single ribbon-tied bunch on the cavetto's lower margin. The Yuan dynasty used a "breaking wave" motif to the rim, seen here in a more stylised and expressive form.<sup>1</sup> To the Ottoman potter any mythological associations this motif may have had for the Chinese were

unknown, but once attracted by its graphic power it continued to be used well into the seventeenth century.<sup>2</sup> By the 1570s the wave border, increasingly removed from its Chinese model, had become a standard feature of Iznik dishes. In its final metamorphosis it became so stylised as to be unrecognisable, to the point of being described as "ammonite scrolls".<sup>3</sup> The very first Iznik examples however, imitate the Yuan waves closely, their rollers painted with feathery parallel lines. These gradual changes in this border motif allow us to accurately date the motifs on Iznik plates. The use of simple floral decoration on the underside of the cavetto also echoes Ming dynasty porcelain.

For similar dishes with tulips and carnations, see Frédéric Hitzel and Mireille Jacotin, *Iznik: L'aventure d'une collection: Les céramiques ottomanes du musée national de la Renaissance Château d'Écouen*, 2005, p. 136, no. 143 and p. 179, no. 222; and Nurhan Atasoy and Julian Raby, *Iznik: The Pottery of Ottoman Turkey*, 1989, p. 227, no. 398.

## Provenance:

Sir Alan Barlow (1881-1968)  
Lady Barlow (1885-1989)  
Hilda Horatia Padel (1919-2017)

## Published:

Géza Fehérvári, *Islamic Pottery: A Comprehensive Study Based on The Barlow Collection*, 1973, p.158, no. 213, pl. 92b.

## References:

1. John Carswell, *Iznik Pottery*, 1998, p. 82.
2. Nurhan Atasoy and Julian Raby, *Iznik: The Pottery of Ottoman Turkey*, 1989, p. 121.
3. Ibid.









## CARNATIONS AND ROSETTE SPRAYS

SYRIA (DAMASCUS), 1570-1580

HEIGHT: 26 CM

WIDTH: 26 CM

An underglaze-painted polychrome tile in shades of cobalt blue, turquoise, sage green and manganese aubergine against a white ground with a design of stylised floral sprays beneath part of a large palmette cartouche.

Part of a larger panel, the tile depicts a number of large carnation sprays, the flowers in aubergine with mid-blue and sage green calyxes.

They emerge from cobalt stems with green and mid-blue leaves, bending against an unseen breeze. A large stylised composite rosette can be seen to the bottom of the tile, with cusped petals in cobalt, turquoise and aubergine, with sage green leaves. Part of a symmetrical palmette cartouche can be seen to the top, painted in shades of blue and surrounding a central trefoil flower.

This unusual design is influenced by similarly aged Iznik ceramics from Turkey, changing the palette and using thicker outlines. The mid-blue hue used on this tile is extremely rare. It is possibly an experiment by the

potter, using both copper and cobalt oxides to create a colour between turquoise and cobalt blue. Arthur Millner notes on our tile that: "The superb colours and crisp drawing are amongst the finest work of Damascus tile-makers".<sup>1</sup>

Provenance:

The Howard Hodgkin Collection

Published:

Arthur Millner, *Damascus Tiles*, 2015, p. 280, fig. 6.87.

Reference:

1. Arthur Millner, *Damascus Tiles*, 2015, p. 280.

















## LEAF BLOWING IN THE WIND

SYRIA (DAMASCUS), 1580-1590

HEIGHT: 23.8 CM

WIDTH: 26.7 CM

The lyrical design of this elegant underglaze-painted tile is anchored by the dramatic sweep of a complex composite *saz* leaf from the lower right to the upper left. Clustered around a central vein silhouetted against a white outline cusped by delicate buds, are small serrated sage green *saz* leaves that jostle and overlap to compose the large single diagonal *saz*. Each of the small *saz* leaves has a spiky central vein, thorny and barbed, in effect very unlike the soft serrated edges of the leaves themselves. This carefully calculated juxtaposition of the hard within the soft, the prickly within the feathery, gives the design a very sophisticated allure.

Within the cobalt blue triangular spaces created above and below the *saz* leaf, are carnation sprays with white serrated petals, green calyxes, white stems and blade-like leaves, heightened here and there with splashes of green. The attention to detail so evident in the composite *saz* leaf is seen in the careful black outlines of the carnation petals, with round cusps on the outer tips, wavy lines dividing the petals in the flowers to the left of the *saz* leaf, and straight lines performing the same function in the flowers to the right. Further variety is provided by just-opening buds and small unserrated flowers not yet fully grown.

The tile is completed by an integral wave border to the top, composed of green trefoil palmettes with splayed bases and white trefoil centres, reserved against a turquoise ground. This upper border, framed by white horizontal margins above and below, indicates that the tile would have

been placed on the edge of a larger tile panel within which the *saz* leaves and carnation sprays would continue to flourish abundantly in the main field. The use of turquoise enriches yet freshens the colour palette.

The *saz* leaf and carnations are classic Ottoman motifs seen on Iznik ceramics, while the crisp, fresh colours and the glassy glaze, though in this case thinner and not as shiny as most Damascus tiles and with unusual iridescence to the top, are characteristic of Damascus. The building of the Süleymaniye mosque and *madrassa* in 1554 in Damascus as well as the city's enhanced status as an important Ottoman provincial capital gave rise in the sixteenth century to a series of buildings throughout Syria - mosques, tombs and grand palaces - decorated with tilework.<sup>1</sup> The Syrian tile designs echo those of Iznik, but are painted with an exuberance and spirit far removed from their more formal counterparts where the designs were more strictly controlled by the court.<sup>2</sup>

Though the design of the present tile has a free-wheeling air and a wind-swept movement characteristic of Syrian tiles, the precision and attention to detail we have noted in the drawing suggest a late sixteenth rather than early seventeenth century date. We follow Arthur Millner's proposal in his book on *Damascus Tiles* to confidently date most Damascus tiles a couple of decades earlier than the more conservative dates traditionally assigned. There is no need to presuppose a long time lag between Damascus tiles and their Iznik exemplars as Syrian potters benefitted from the influx of tile-makers fresh from the refurbishment of the Dome of Rock carried out in Jerusalem between 1545 and 1552, and from the high technical standards already achieved by the

local Mamluk traditions, upon which the group of Iznik potters from the Jerusalem project established the Damascus tile industry.

Provenance:

Count Lamberto Vannutelli, Rome, 1904

Thence by descent to his family

Count Lamberto Vannutelli was the great-grandfather of the owner of this tile. Count Vannutelli was born in Rome on 24th June 1871 and died in Rome on 5th April 1966. The owner of the tile was thirteen when the great-grandfather died and remembers him well. Count Vannutelli purchased the tile in Turkey in 1904.

Count Vannutelli had a distinguished naval career as a Captain during World War I and later rose to the rank of Admiral, retiring in the early 1930s. While serving as Military Attaché to the Italian Embassy in Washington from 1917-1920, he was awarded the Presidential Navy Distinguished Service Medal for service to the Allied Forces in World War I.

He was a famed African explorer and one of the two surviving members of the massacre of the Italian Geographical Society's Bottego expedition which, in 1892-1893, set out to search for sources of the Nile in the Horn of Africa.

He was commissioned by the Italian Geographical Society to visit Turkey from April-August 1904. His report was published by the Society as a book, *In Anatolia*, in 1905. It was during this visit that he purchased the present tile, which has been in the family's possession ever since.

Literature:

Arthur Millner, *Damascus Tiles: Mamluk and Ottoman Architectural Ceramics from Syria*, 2015.

References:

1. Venetia Porter, *Islamic Tiles*, 1995, pp. 103 and 119.
2. Ibid.

















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### CALLIGRAPHIC TILES

SYRIA (DAMASCUS), CIRCA 1600

HEIGHT: 32.5 CM

WIDTH: 65 CM

A pair of large square underglaze-painted tiles in polychrome colours of cobalt blue, sage green, turquoise,

black, white and aubergine, depicting calligraphic script enclosed within a cusped cartouche framed by horizontal borders to the top and bottom.

The focal point of the pair of tiles is the flowing white calligraphy. The Arabic inscription is written in *thuluth* and reads:

"Muhammad is the Prophet of God, the faithful keeper of the promise (of God)."

Highlighted by a thin black outline, the script is reserved against a dark cobalt blue ground, appearing slightly dappled by the thick brushstrokes of the artist. Small areas of the text are





further highlighted by splashes of vibrant turquoise as well as a small decorative split-leaf palmette to the left. The large cartouche has a thick white border which separates it from the surrounding sage green ground where four spandrels contain white split-leaf palmettes with aubergine and cobalt details. The main field is

framed above and below by white and turquoise borders and is painted under a thick glossy glaze.

For a lunette tile panel with a similar *thuluth* inscription, see Arthur Millner, *Damascus Tiles*, 2015, p. 152, fig. 4.42 and on display at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Published:  
Christie's, King Street, London, *Fine Persian and Islamic Works of Art*, Friday, 20 April 1979 at 11am, lot 39.

Exhibited:  
Private Collection of Islamic Art at Le Musée Nicolas Sursock, Beirut, Lebanon, May-July, 1974.











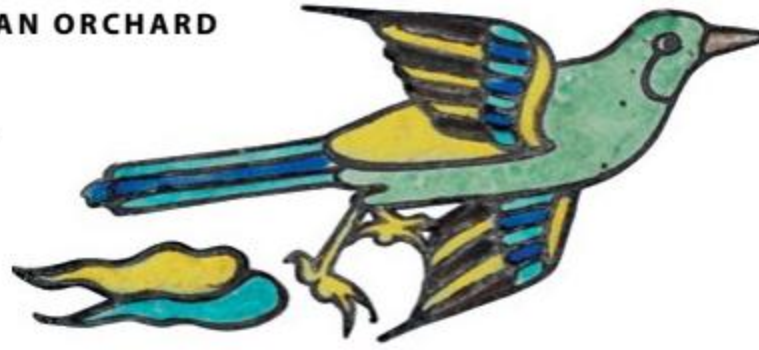
## APPLE PICKING IN AN ORCHARD

IRAN (SAFAVID), 17TH CENTURY

HEIGHT: 118 CM

WIDTH: 95.3 CM

DEPTH: 2.2 CM



A rectangular panel of twenty tiles in the *cuerda seca* technique in shades of yellow, cobalt blue, sage green, ochre, turquoise and black against a lavender ground in the central field and white and lavender grounds in the framing border tiles. The panel depicts a charming scene of three figures picking apples in an orchard.

From the bottom of the panel, where a small group of coloured rocks lie, a magnificent turquoise apple tree grows upwards, filling the lavender ground around it. Its trunk is cusped to the base to suggest the gnarly lumps which tend to form in real life, and above it sprout branches of variegated size to either side. Rounded swirls indicate knots or burrs in the bark which create a suggestion of naturalism in what is otherwise a fantastical scene. Next to the rocks, on the left of the panel, apples are being collected by a kneeling male figure dressed in a vibrant yellow tunic, striped turban and turquoise belt. With his hand outstretched, he catches them joyously from above; his head is tilted upwards, expectantly waiting for the next windfall. Framing him to the left are stylised floral sprays emanating from *chinoiserie* style scrolling rocks, all painted in vibrant hues.

To the right side of the tree, a standing courtier, resplendent in his sage green tunic, points with his right hand towards a lower branch as if advising the tree climber of where to find the next fruit to pick. The climber, perched precariously towards the top of the tree, looks down intently at his friend below. He wears a dappled brown coat and sage green leggings and sports a multi-coloured turban. His right hand grabs a thick branch to help steady himself whilst he picks a large green apple with his left. The tree is filled with bifurcated leaves painted

in yellow and cobalt blue, which compete for our attention with the large green fruit they surround.

To the top of the main field are floating *chinoiserie* style cloud bands and three stylised birds in the sky. To each side of the tree are further floral sprays. A thin turquoise band separates this scene from a wide meandering floral border with cobalt blue five-petalled rosette sprays and split-leaf palmettes on an off-white ground.

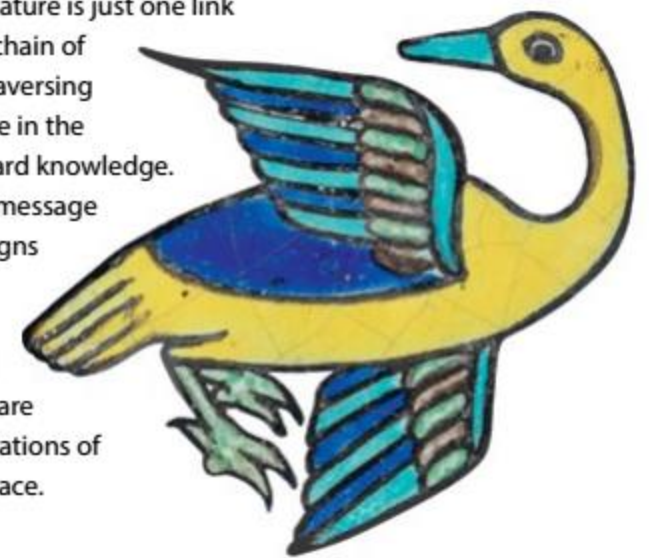
Some colours on various parts of the panel appear mottled, as can be seen on the brown tunic of the climber, as well as areas of sage green applied as clothing, rocks and apples. This is the result of an unusual technique that causes the glaze to pull apart when fired to create a sense of texture. The deliberate fracturing of the glaze may perhaps be due to a reaction between the oxides and the glaze. The lavender colour of the ground is also very unusual and rarely seen on Safavid tiles.

For tiles and panels using similar colours and techniques from the same period and artist, see the panel of two tiles in the Simon Ray *Indian & Islamic Works of Art* catalogue, 2004, pp. 34-35, cat. no. 13 depicting a "Courtier Seated Under a Tree". These tiles are now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. For a pair of tiles depicting a "Resting Sword and Quiver" and a single tile with an "Ibex and Fruit Tree", see the Simon Ray *Indian & Islamic Works of Art* catalogue, 2005, pp. 52-55, cat. nos. 23 and 24.

Isfahan, the Safavid capital, and Na'in were the two main centres in which buildings were lavishly decorated with tilework panels such as ours. The old tile-making tradition of composing repetitive geometrical

or vegetal patterns was kept alive on mosques and *madrasahs*, but an important innovation on secular buildings was a composition of square tiles individually painted as single elements of an outdoor scene with characters set in a garden landscape. These were placed in royal garden pavilions from the time of Shah 'Abbas to that of Shah Sulayman.<sup>1</sup>

Depictions of orchards and gardens were important, with the portrayal of trees such as cypresses and willows as well as shrubs and birds possibly inspired by the poetry of Nizami and Saadi. These designs have been used on tiles but also Safavid fabrics and textiles. The use of trees is also inspired by the "promises of beautiful heavenly gardens" in the Qu'ran and are a "symbol of God's mercy and forgiveness". In Persian literature, mysticism, and arts, gardens are a conduit to the innermost layers of thought and imagination and a sage interpretation of the Persian worldview. According to this worldview, nature is just one link in the great chain of being and traversing it is one stage in the journey toward knowledge. The implicit message in these designs is that trees, flowers, animals, and all creatures are but manifestations of the divine grace.



Provenance:

Private French Collection

Reference:

1. <http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/444949?sortBy=Relevance&ft=safavid+tiles&offset=0&rpp=20&pos=4>























## HEXAGONAL TILE

INDIA (DECCAN, BIJAPUR),  
LATE 16TH/EARLY 17TH CENTURY

HEIGHT: 16 CM  
WIDTH: 14 CM

An underglaze-painted earthenware tile of hexagonal form, decorated in cobalt blue and turquoise against a white ground, with trefoil palmettes, split-leaf palmettes and vegetal interlace issuing from a central blue diamond with convex sides containing a white quatrefoil flower-head. Split-leaf palmettes in bifurcated pairs outline the cusped petals of the white quatrefoil flower that surrounds the centre, each petal enclosing a blue trefoil palmette.

The juxtaposition of trefoils against quatrefoils creates a visual rhythm that energises the simple design, causing it to radiate outwards in polyrhythm. The same visual tension is created in the broad turquoise outer edge by setting trefoils against split-leaf palmettes, thus enclosing three-against-four visual rhythms by a surround of two-against-three. The simplicity of the design is elevated by the sophistication with which it is executed.

The red body, white slip and underglaze cobalt and turquoise are classic features of tile production on the Indian subcontinent, particularly in areas such as the Deccan, which came under the influence of numerous Iranian sheikhs, merchants as well as potters and workmen.<sup>1</sup> The presence of Iranians in the Deccan is demonstrated by the Persian appearance of the *madrasah* of Mahmud Gawan in Bidar, built

in 1472, with its *banna'i* (glazed bricks laid on their ends) and tile mosaic facade.<sup>2</sup>

The present tile is identical in colour and design to a hexagonal tile in the British Museum in London, which has a group of tiles, both hexagonal and rectangular, from Bijapur, the capital of one of the Deccani sultanates that flourished between 1500 and 1686. Two hexagonal tiles are published by Venetia Porter in *Islamic Tiles*, 1995, pp. 87 and 90, no. 82. Porter illustrates on p. 90 a tile just like ours and below, a hexagonal tile with an extensive white ground framed by a simpler turquoise border. In the latter example, bifurcated split-leaf palmettes once again enclose trefoils within quatrefoils. Contemporary tiles found in Goa show the same connections while the blue-and-white colour scheme combined with turquoise links Bijapur tilework to that of Sindh and Multan, like the Deccan, areas with strong trading connections to the central Islamic lands.<sup>3</sup>

A group of square and rectangular Bijapur tiles with the same colour schemes from the collections of Madame Krishnâ Riboud, Paris and the Museu Nacional do Azulejo, Lisbon, were exhibited in the musée d'Aquitaine and the musée des Arts décoratifs in Bordeaux in 1998; these are published in Thierry-Nicholas Tchakaloff et al, *La Route des Indes: Les Indes et l'Europe: échanges artistiques et héritage commun 1650-1850*, 1998, p. 95, cat. nos. 6-11.

Despite the numerous connections and comparable examples, and the presence of its identical counterpart

in the British Museum, Helen Philon has kindly observed that exact parallels still *in situ* in the Deccan are not easily found, though similar tiles are displayed at the Archaeological Museum in Bijapur. In part, this is due to the hexagonal shape, which is less frequently used than rectangular examples.

According to Philon, monochrome hexagonal tiles once decorated the *pishtaq* facade of the Takht Mahal in the Fort of Bidar, dating to the mid fifteenth century, and in the pool house adjacent to the Takht Mahal. The pool house was added to the Takht Mahal complex around 1500, a dating suggested by the manner of its stucco ornamentation. Blue-and-white combined with turquoise and also yellow can be seen in the tiles that embellish the southern facade of the tomb of the Bahmani sultan, Alauddin Ahmad Shah II (died 1458), who was responsible for the Takht Mahal.

The combination of blue, turquoise and white is a palette used in tiles from the reign of Mahmud Shah (died 1518). These colours are seen in the inscription that decorates the Sharza Darwaza that dates from 1503 at the Fort of Bidar, by which time hexagonal and square tiles coexist.

The same colour scheme can also be seen on the tiles that decorate the facade of the Chini Mahal in Daulatabad, which according to George Michell was built, or at least much altered, when the Nizam Shahi sultans of Bijapur occupied the site. The Chini Mahal is illustrated in George Michell and Helen Philon with photographs by Antonio Martinelli,

*Islamic Architecture of Deccan India*, 2018, pp. 92-93. For Michell and Philon, the date of the Chini Mahal is as uncertain as the enigma of its original purpose. Probably begun prior to the Nizam Shahi occupation of Daulatabad, it was extensively modified during their reign.

Located opposite the Bahmani palace in Kalakot, this pavilion takes its name from the few glazed tiles that remain on its facade. Philon notes that these tiles copy a number of motifs first recorded on the tiles found on the aforementioned southern facade of Alauddin Ahmad Shah's tomb. The tiles date from the Nizam Shahi occupation and are therefore late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, similar to the dates we have assigned our tile with its schematised pre-Mughal rather than naturalistic Mughal motifs. Philon observes that in the Deccan the referencing of earlier examples belonging to famous rulers is a recurrent theme and the fact that the Nizam Shahis copy Bahmani designs stresses their indebtedness and connections to the Bahmanis.

### Provenance:

Private Swiss Collection, acquired by the owner's father in India in the 1950s.

### Acknowledgement:

We would like to thank Helen Philon for her expert advice.

### References:

1. Venetia Porter, *Islamic Tiles*, 1995, p. 87. Though the red body is characteristic of the Deccan, Helen Philon has also observed some coarse bodied examples in grey or white.
2. Porter, 1995, p. 87.
3. Ibid.







## HEXAGONAL TILE

INDIA (DECCAN, BIJAPUR),  
LATE 16TH/EARLY 17TH CENTURY

HEIGHT: 16 CM  
WIDTH: 14 CM

An underglaze-painted earthenware tile of hexagonal form, decorated in cobalt blue and turquoise against a white ground. Stylised composite flowers consisting of three blue petals forming a trefoil palmette resting on two blue outstretched leaves and two blue truncated leaves that indicate the calyx, all sprouting from a turquoise dot at the centre, surmount the four points of a central turquoise diamond with concave sides.

From vines that criss-cross at the centre of the diamond radiate arabesques with split-leaf palmettes that enclose the diamond and the four composite flowers with the larger outline of a four-petalled flower. In kaleidoscopic fashion, the design continues to expand towards the edges of the tile, replete with further trefoils, curling leaves, dangling stamens and buds hanging pendant from the turquoise edges of the tile.

The red body, white slip and underglaze cobalt and turquoise are classic features of tile production on the Indian subcontinent, particularly in areas such as the Deccan, which came under the influence of numerous Iranian sheikhs, merchants as well as potters and workmen.<sup>1</sup> The presence of Iranians in the Deccan is demonstrated by the Persian appearance of the *madrasah* of Mahmud Gawan in Bidar, built in 1472, with its *banna'i* (glazed bricks laid on their ends) and tile mosaic facade.<sup>2</sup>

The present tile is similar in colour though more complex in design to a hexagonal tile at the British Museum in London, which has a group of tiles, both hexagonal and rectangular, from Bijapur, the capital of one of the Deccani sultanates that flourished between 1500 and 1686. Two hexagonal tiles are published by Venetia Porter in *Islamic Tiles*, 1995, pp. 87 and 90, no. 82. Porter illustrates on p. 90 a hexagonal tile identical to the Bijapur tile we illustrate as cat. no. 26 in our present catalogue and below that, a hexagonal tile with an extensive white ground framed by a simpler turquoise border. In the latter example, bifurcated split-leaf palmettes enclose trefoils within quatrefoils. Contemporary tiles found in Goa show the same connections while the blue-and-white colour scheme combined with turquoise links Bijapur tilework to that of Sindh and Multan, like the Deccan, areas with strong trading connections to the central Islamic lands.<sup>3</sup>

A group of square and rectangular Bijapur tiles with the same colour schemes from the collections of Madame Krishnâ Riboud, Paris and the Museu Nacional do Azulejo, Lisbon, were exhibited in the musée d'Aquitaine and the musée des Arts décoratifs in Bordeaux in 1998; these are published in Thierry-Nicholas Tchakaloff et al, *La Route des Indes: Les Indes et l'Europe: échanges artistiques et héritage commun 1650-1850*, 1998, p. 95, cat. nos. 6-11.

Despite the numerous connections and comparable examples, Helen Philon has kindly observed that exact

parallels for the two Bijapur tiles in our catalogue still *in situ* in the Deccan are not easily found, though similar tiles are displayed at the Archaeological Museum in Bijapur. In part, this is due to the hexagonal shape, which is less frequently used than rectangular examples.

According to Philon, monochrome hexagonal tiles once decorated the *pishtaq* facade of the Takht Mahal in the Fort of Bidar, dating to the mid fifteenth century, and in the pool house adjacent to the Takht Mahal. The pool house was added to the Takht Mahal complex around 1500, a dating suggested by the manner of its stucco ornamentation. Blue-and-white combined with turquoise and also yellow can be seen in the tiles that embellish the southern facade of the tomb of the Bahmani sultan, Alauddin Ahmad Shah II (died 1458), who was responsible for the Takht Mahal.

The combination of blue, turquoise and white is a palette used in tiles from the reign of Mahmud Shah (died 1518). These colours are seen in the inscription that decorates the Sharza Darwaza that dates from 1503 at the Fort of Bidar, by which time hexagonal and square tiles coexist.

The same colour scheme can also be seen on the tiles that decorate the facade of the Chini Mahal in Daulatabad, which according to George Michell was built, or at least much altered, when the Nizam Shahi sultans of Bijapur occupied the site. The Chini Mahal is illustrated in George Michell and Helen Philon with photographs by Antonio Martinelli, *Islamic Architecture of Deccan India*,

2018, pp. 92-93. For Michell and Philon, the date of the Chini Mahal is as uncertain as the enigma of its original purpose. Probably begun prior to the Nizam Shahi occupation of Daulatabad, it was extensively modified during their reign.

Located opposite the Bahmani palace in Kalakot, this pavilion takes its name from the few glazed tiles that remain on its facade. Philon notes that these tiles copy a number of motifs first recorded on the tiles found on the aforementioned southern facade of Alauddin Ahmad Shah's tomb. The tiles date from the Nizam Shahi occupation and are therefore late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, similar to the dates we have assigned our tile with its schematised pre-Mughal rather than naturalistic Mughal motifs. Philon observes that in the Deccan the referencing of earlier examples belonging to famous rulers is a recurrent theme and the fact that the Nizam Shahis copy Bahmani designs stresses their indebtedness and connections to the Bahmanis.

### Provenance:

Private Swiss Collection, acquired by the owner's father in India in the 1950s.

### Acknowledgement:

We would like to thank Helen Philon for her expert advice.

### References:

1. Venetia Porter, *Islamic Tiles*, 1995, p. 87. Though the red body is characteristic of the Deccan, Helen Philon has also observed some coarse bodied examples in grey or white.
2. Porter, 1995, p. 87.
3. Ibid.







## FLORAL SPRAYS RISING FROM A VASE

NORTHERN INDIA  
(MUGHAL, PROBABLY LAHORE OR KASHMIR),  
17TH CENTURY

HEIGHT: 18 CM  
WIDTH: 16 CM

A tile in the *cuerda seca* technique with a design of composite flowers on multiple stems accompanied by long blade-like and short serrated leaves, rising from the widening trumpet mouth of a vase decorated with an arabesque of split-leaf palmettes. The central flower resembles a hyacinth superimposed with a small soft-petalled flower to the centre while the two lobe-petalled flowers to the upper right and left corners have small serrated flowers like daisies in the centre. Further flowers can be glimpsed to the top centre and on the sides. The flower petals have a distinctive white margin which is the white slip with which the earthenware body is covered before the application of other colours outlined by the manganese brown of the *cuerda seca* technique.

This tile relates closely in design, colours, technique and stylistic treatment of the flowers and leaves, including the distinctive white outline of the petals against the green ground, to a group of tiles in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London said to come from the

tomb of the saint Shah Madani at But Kadal, Zabidal, near Srinagar in Kashmir.

The group in the Victoria and Albert Museum was acquired from Mr Frederick H. Andrews in 1923. He had been living in Srinagar, where he was the Director of the Technical Institute of Kashmir, and wrote to the museum in 1922 offering to sell his collection before he left that year to return to the United Kingdom. He said that the tiles were part of the decoration of the Madani mosque and tomb but the Victoria and Albert Museum believe that though the tiles were installed in a Kashmiri monument, they were probably made in Lahore.

The tiles at the tomb of Shah Madani show similarities of design and colour to the present example. According to Rosemary Crill, the tomb dates from the mid fifteenth century, but it was refurbished by a Mughal nobleman during the reign of Shah Jahan, when tiles in the *cuerda seca* technique were installed.<sup>1</sup> A group of thirteen

Mughal tiles from the tomb of Shah Madani, from the donation of Jean et Krishnâ Riboud in the Musée Guimet, Paris, is published in Amina Okada, *L'Inde des Princes: La donation Jean et Krishnâ Riboud*, 2000, pp. 128-133.

A group of thirteen tiles from the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, also said to come from the tomb of Shah Madani, was exhibited and published in Robert Skelton et al, *The Indian Heritage: Court Life and Arts under Mughal Rule*, 1982, pp. 26-27, no. 5. Some of the tiles have designs closely related to the Riboud donation at the Guimet.

The use of the *cuerda seca* technique would have been learnt from Safavid tile-makers. In this technique, the design is outlined on the fired tile with a manganese purple pigment mixed with a greasy substance, which separates the areas to be coloured. These are then painted with a brush and the tile is fired a second time. The greasy lines disappear, leaving a dark brownish outline separating the different colours. *Cuerda seca*, literally meaning "dry cord" in

Spanish, was developed during the latter part of the fourteenth century in Central Asia.

The *cuerda seca* technique (*kashi*) was brought to northern India from Iran. Robert Skelton has made the observation that "even in recent times, the makers of glazed tiles (*kashigars*) have been Muslims, whereas Hindu builders (*sutradhars*) have restricted themselves to working with unglazed terracotta."<sup>2</sup> The use of a resist application between the colours gives distinct separation between them and a clarity of line which is particularly effective in architectural decoration. The tiles combine glaze techniques learnt from Persian craftsmen with a palette that is distinctly Indian in its warmth. It is likely that Lahore was one of the principal centres of the Mughal *cuerda seca* tile manufacture, but tiles in the *cuerda seca* technique may also have been made in Kashmir for the monuments constructed there.

Provenance:  
The Howard Hodgkin Collection

### References:

1. See Robert Skelton et al, *The Indian Heritage: Court Life and Arts under Mughal Rule*, 1982, pp. 26-27, nos. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, for a discussion of Mughal tiles in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum.
2. Ibid.

















## COMPOSITE FLOWERS AND OVERLAPPING LEAVES

NORTHERN INDIA  
(MUGHAL, PROBABLY LAHORE OR KASHMIR),  
17TH CENTURY

HEIGHT: 19.2 CM  
WIDTH: 19.5 CM

A tile in the *cuerda seca* technique with a design of composite flowers and variegated leaves sprouting from an arabesque of split-leaf palmettes and intertwining vines. The tile is divided into two halves by the complex bi-coloured split-leaf palmette that rises from the bottom of the tile to scroll across diagonally from the lower left to the upper right, bisecting the green ground on the left from the bold contrast of the vibrant yellow ground on the right.

On the left edge of the tile is an overblown lotus with a pomegranate superimposed on the centre. The pomegranate and the calyx of the lotus both have a distinctive white margin, which is the white slip with which the earthenware body is covered before the application of other colours outlined by the manganese brown of the *cuerda seca* technique.

The split-leaf palmette at the bottom of the tile is composed of contrasting ochre and manganese purple sections, each ornately ornamented with buds and flange-like projections incorporated into sections of vines resembling cloud bands. Curling across the split-leaf palmette is a serrated *saz* leaf composed of

overlapping sections in ochre and manganese purple outlined with white margins. On the right edge of the tile can be seen a flower with purple petals edged in white over ochre petals peeping out from a layer beneath. The purple petals are similarly outlined in white. The flower forms the radiant centre of the circular yellow cartouche to the right.

This tile relates closely in design, colours, technique and stylistic treatment of the flowers and leaves, including the distinctive white outline of the petals against the green ground, to a group of tiles in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London said to come from the tomb of the saint Shah Madani at But Kadal, Zabidal, near Srinagar in Kashmir.

The group in the Victoria and Albert Museum was acquired from Mr Frederick H. Andrews in 1923. He had been living in Srinagar, where he was the Director of the Technical Institute of Kashmir, and wrote to the museum in 1922 offering to sell his collection before he left that year to return to the United Kingdom. He said that the tiles were part of the decoration of the Madani mosque and tomb but the Victoria and Albert Museum believe that though the tiles were installed in a Kashmiri monument, they were probably made in Lahore.

The tiles at the tomb of Shah Madani show similarities of design and colour to the present example. According to Rosemary Crill, the tomb dates from

the mid fifteenth century, but it was refurbished by a Mughal nobleman during the reign of Shah Jahan, when tiles in the *cuerda seca* technique were installed.<sup>1</sup>

A group of thirteen Mughal tiles from the tomb of Shah Madani, from the donation of Jean et Krishnâ Riboud in the Musée Guimet, Paris, is published in Amina Okada, *L'Inde des Princes: La donation et Jean et Krishnâ Riboud*, 2000, pp. 128-133.

Thirteen tiles from Shah Madani in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum were exhibited and published in Robert Skelton et al, *The Indian Heritage: Court Life and Arts under Mughal Rule*, 1982, pp. 26-27, no. 5. Some of the tiles have designs closely related to the Riboud donation at the Guimet.

The present tile with white margins to the flowers characteristic of the Victoria and Albert Museum group, and bi-coloured arabesques against green and yellow grounds relating to the Musée Guimet group, thus exemplifies characteristics of Shah Madani tiles from both the famous museum collections.

Provenance:  
The Howard Hodgkin Collection

Reference:  
1. See Robert Skelton et al, *The Indian Heritage: Court Life and Arts under Mughal Rule*, 1982, pp. 26-27, nos. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, for a discussion of Mughal tiles in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum.















## SPLIT-LEAF PALMETTE AND COMPOSITE FLORAL SPRAYS

NORTHERN INDIA  
(MUGHAL, PROBABLY LAHORE OR KASHMIR),  
17TH CENTURY

HEIGHT: 19.2 CM  
WIDTH: 19.5 CM

A tile in the *cuerda seca* technique with a design of a central split-leaf palmette dividing the bi-coloured ground into a vibrant yellow below and rich green above. From the stem and bifurcated leaves of the split-leaf palmette sprout an arabesque of composite flowers and leaves on scrolling vines. A large *saz* leaf composed of overlapping ochre and manganese sections curls over the right blade of the split-leaf palmette. To the bottom is a part of a lotus flower with overlapping leaves in ochre and purple. In the lower left corner is a trefoil palmette and above, a trefoil purple flower with two ochre leaves.

A fragmentary tile with part of this design showing the split-leaf palmette against the yellow ground is in the Musée Guimet, Paris. The Guimet tile fragment is one of a group of thirteen Mughal tiles from the tomb of the saint Shah Madani at But Kadal, Zabidal, near Srinagar in Kashmir. The thirteen tiles are part

of the donation of Jean et Krishnâ Riboud to the Musée Guimet. They are published in Amina Okada, *L'Inde des Princes: La donation Jean et Krishnâ Riboud*, 2000, pp. 128-133. The tile fragment similar to ours is illustrated on p. 133.

The present tile and those in the Riboud donation relate closely in design, colours, technique and stylistic treatment of the flowers and leaves to a group of tiles in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, also said to come from the tomb of Shah Madani.

The flower petals in this tile have a distinctive white margin which is the white slip with which the earthenware body is covered before the application of other colours outlined by the manganese brown of the *cuerda seca* technique. This is a characteristic of many of the Shah Madani tiles at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The group in the Victoria and Albert Museum was acquired from Mr Frederick H. Andrews in 1923. He had been living in Srinagar, where he was the Director of the Technical Institute of Kashmir, and wrote to the museum in 1922 offering to sell his collection before he left that year to

return to the United Kingdom. He said that the tiles were part of the decoration of the Madani mosque and tomb but the Victoria and Albert Museum believe that though the tiles were installed in a Kashmiri monument, they were probably made in Lahore.

The tiles at the tomb of Shah Madani show similarities of design and colour to the present example. According to Rosemary Crill, the tomb dates from the mid fifteenth century, but it was refurbished by a Mughal nobleman during the reign of Shah Jahan, when tiles in the *cuerda seca* technique were installed.<sup>1</sup>

Thirteen tiles from Shah Madani at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London were exhibited and published in Robert Skelton et al, *The Indian Heritage: Court Life and Arts under Mughal Rule*, 1982, pp. 26-27, no. 5.

### Provenance:

The Howard Hodgkin Collection

### Reference:

1. See Robert Skelton et al, *The Indian Heritage: Court Life and Arts under Mughal Rule*, 1982, pp. 26-27, nos. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, for a discussion of Mughal tiles in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum.















## FLORAL SPRAYS AND STRAP-WORK CARTOUCHES

NORTHERN INDIA  
(MUGHAL, PROBABLY LAHORE OR KASHMIR),  
17TH CENTURY

HEIGHT: 18.5 CM  
WIDTH: 17.8 CM

A tile in the *cuerda seca* technique with a design of variegated leaves and composite flowers sprouting from boldly coloured cartouches of blue, ochre and green divided by bi-coloured blue and yellow cusped strap-work borders embellished with leaves, serrated split-leaves, scrolling vines and buds. The arabesques have a tightly compacted energy that imparts the vital tension of opposing forces of compression and expansion to the statuesque design, and a sense of organic growth enhanced by the leaves and buds that unfurl simultaneously in multiple directions.

A tile of almost identical design and colours though the image is mirrored in reverse is in the Musée Guimet, Paris; here the blue cartouche occupies the lower left corner. The Guimet tile is one of a group of thirteen Mughal tiles from the tomb of the saint Shah Madani at But Kadal,

Zabidal, near Srinagar in Kashmir. The thirteen tiles are part of the donation of Jean et Krishnâ Riboud to the Musée Guimet. They are published in Amina Okada, *L'Inde des Princes: La donation Jean et Krishnâ Riboud*, 2000, pp. 128-133. The tile similar to ours is illustrated on p. 133. Several other tiles in this group also exhibit the bi-coloured strap-work cartouches.

The present tile and those in the Riboud donation relate closely in design, colours, technique and stylistic treatment of the flowers and leaves to a group of tiles in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, also said to come from the tomb of Shah Madani.

The group in the Victoria and Albert Museum was acquired from Mr Frederick H. Andrews in 1923. He had been living in Srinagar, where he was the Director of the Technical Institute of Kashmir, and wrote to the museum in 1922 offering to sell his collection before he left that year to return to the United Kingdom. He said that the tiles were part of the decoration of the Madani mosque and tomb but the Victoria and Albert

Museum believe that though the tiles were installed in a Kashmiri monument, they were probably made in Lahore.

The tiles at the tomb of Shah Madani show similarities of design and colour to the present example. According to Rosemary Crill, the tomb dates from the mid fifteenth century, but it was refurbished by a Mughal nobleman during the reign of Shah Jahan, when tiles in the *cuerda seca* technique were installed.<sup>1</sup>

Thirteen tiles from Shah Madani at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London were exhibited and published in Robert Skelton et al, *The Indian Heritage: Court Life and Arts under Mughal Rule*, 1982, pp. 26-27, no. 5.

### Provenance:

The Simon Digby Collection

The Howard Hodgkin Collection

### Reference:

1. See Robert Skelton et al, *The Indian Heritage: Court Life and Arts under Mughal Rule*, 1982, pp. 26-27, nos. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, for a discussion of Mughal tiles in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum.







## FLORAL SPRAYS AND STRAP-WORK CARTOUCHES

NORTHERN INDIA  
(MUGHAL, PROBABLY LAHORE OR KASHMIR),  
17TH CENTURY

HEIGHT: 19.5 CM  
WIDTH: 18.8 CM

A tile in the *cuerda seca* technique with a design of variegated leaves and composite flowers sprouting from boldly coloured cartouches of blue, ochre and green divided by bi-coloured blue and yellow cusped strap-work borders embellished with leaves, serrated split-leaves, scrolling vines and buds. The arabesques have a tightly compacted energy that imparts the vital tension of opposing forces of compression and expansion to the statuesque design, and a sense of organic growth enhanced by the leaves and buds that unfurl simultaneously in multiple directions.

A tile of almost identical design and colours though the image is mirrored in reverse is in the Musée Guimet, Paris; here the blue cartouche occupies the lower left corner. The Guimet tile is one of a group of thirteen Mughal tiles from the tomb of the saint Shah Madani at But Kadal,

Zabidal, near Srinagar in Kashmir. The thirteen tiles are part of the donation of Jean et Krishnâ Riboud to the Musée Guimet. They are published in Amina Okada, *L'Inde des Princes: La donation Jean et Krishnâ Riboud*, 2000, pp. 128-133. The tile similar to ours is illustrated on p. 133. Several other tiles in this group also exhibit the bi-coloured strap-work cartouches.

The present tile and those in the Riboud donation relate closely in design, colours, technique and stylistic treatment of the flowers and leaves to a group of tiles in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, also said to come from the tomb of Shah Madani.

The group in the Victoria and Albert Museum was acquired from Mr Frederick H. Andrews in 1923. He had been living in Srinagar, where he was the Director of the Technical Institute of Kashmir, and wrote to the museum in 1922 offering to sell his collection before he left that year to return to the United Kingdom. He said that the tiles were part of the decoration of the Madani mosque and tomb but the Victoria and Albert

Museum believe that though the tiles were installed in a Kashmiri monument, they were probably made in Lahore.

The tiles at the tomb of Shah Madani show similarities of design and colour to the present example. According to Rosemary Crill, the tomb dates from the mid fifteenth century, but it was refurbished by a Mughal nobleman during the reign of Shah Jahan, when tiles in the *cuerda seca* technique were installed.<sup>1</sup>

Thirteen tiles from Shah Madani at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London were exhibited and published in Robert Skelton et al, *The Indian Heritage: Court Life and Arts under Mughal Rule*, 1982, pp. 26-27, no. 5.

### Provenance:

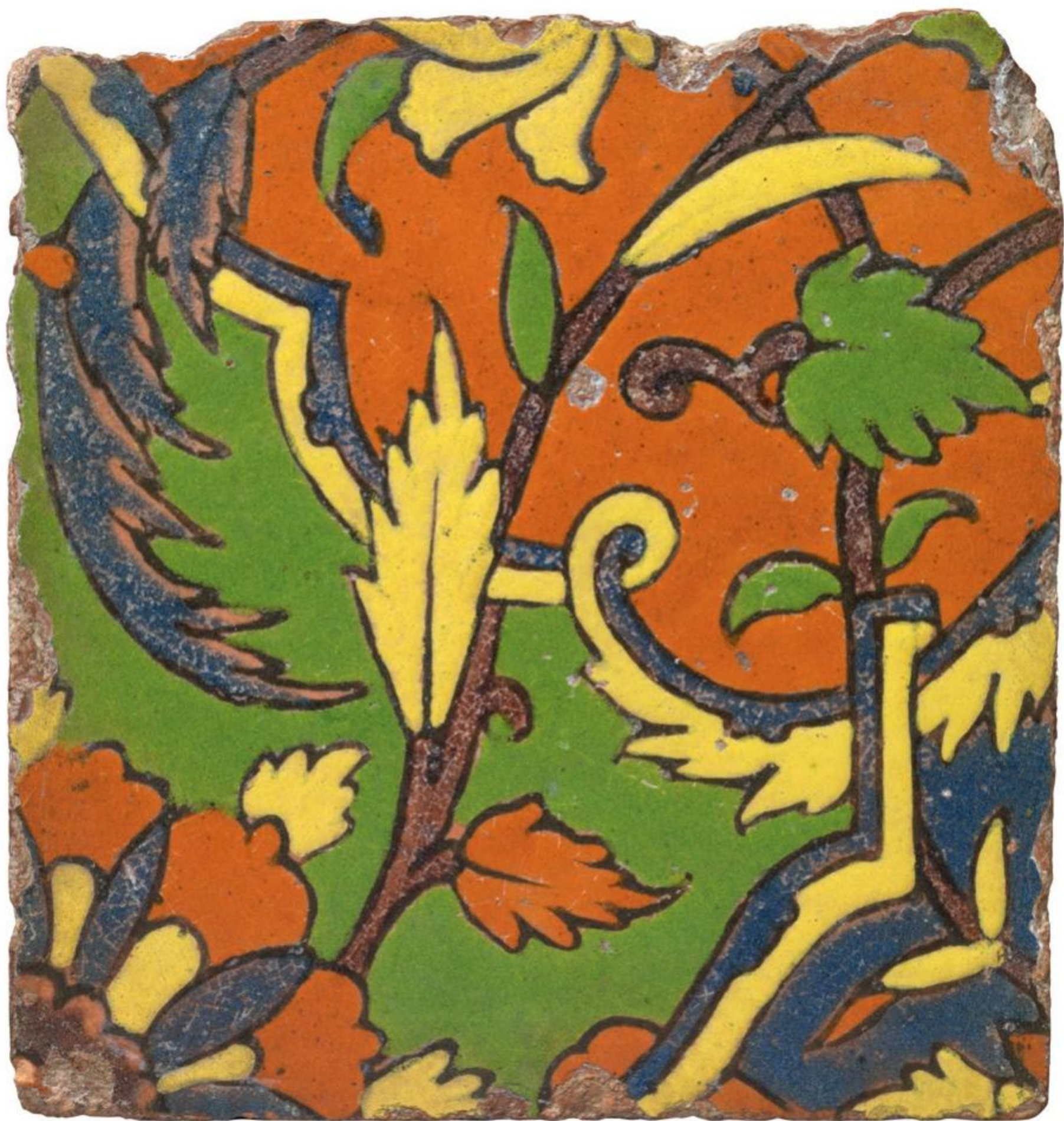
The Simon Digby Collection

The Howard Hodgkin Collection

### Reference:

1. See Robert Skelton et al, *The Indian Heritage: Court Life and Arts under Mughal Rule*, 1982, pp. 26-27, nos. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, for a discussion of Mughal tiles in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum.







## FLOWERS, LEAVES AND SPLIT-LEAF PALMETTES

NORTHERN INDIA  
(MUGHAL, PROBABLY LAHORE OR KASHMIR),  
17TH CENTURY

HEIGHT: 19.5 CM  
WIDTH: 16.8 CM

A tile in the *cuerda seca* technique with a design of variegated leaves and composite flowers sprouting from interlacing vines and split-leaf palmettes against a green ground. From the lower left corner rises a large ochre split-leaf palmette edged with blue flanges, buds and fronds. To the bottom edge is a trefoil composite flower from the tip of which sprouts an ochre vine that boldly dissects the split-leaf palmette and divides the tile into four quarters. Curling in from the right edge to dangle its bifurcated petals above the trefoil flower is a stylised lily, the trajectory of its blue stem mirrored by the upward flourish of the stem above bearing a yellow leaf with a single vein. To the upper right corner is a composite

lotus with serrated petals from which unfurls a bi-coloured stem that bifurcates as it grows to the left sprouting a yellow *saz* leaf on an ochre calyx and a flower with an ochre centre and yellow petals on a blue vine.

The design and colours on this tile are closely related to a group of thirteen Mughal tiles from the tomb of the saint Shah Madani at But Kadal, Zabidal, near Srinagar in Kashmir, now in the Musée Guimet, Paris. These tiles form part of the donation of Jean et Krishnâ Riboud to the Musée Guimet; they are published in Amina Okada, *L'Inde des Princes: La donation Jean et Krishnâ Riboud*, 2000, pp. 128-133.

The present tile and those in the Riboud donation relate closely in design, colours, technique and stylistic treatment of the flowers and leaves to a group of tiles in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, also said to come from the tomb of Shah Madani.

The tiles at the tomb of Shah Madani show similarities of design and colour to the present example. According to Rosemary Crill, the tomb dates from the mid fifteenth century, but it was refurbished by a Mughal nobleman during the reign of Shah Jahan, when tiles in the *cuerda seca* technique were installed.<sup>1</sup>

Thirteen tiles from Shah Madani at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London were exhibited and published in Robert Skelton et al, *The Indian Heritage: Court Life and Arts under Mughal Rule*, 1982, pp. 26-27, no. 5.

Provenance:  
The Howard Hodgkin Collection

Reference:  
1. See Robert Skelton et al, *The Indian Heritage: Court Life and Arts under Mughal Rule*, 1982, pp. 26-27, nos. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, for a discussion of Mughal tiles in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum.







## ARABESQUES, FLOWERS AND LEAVES

NORTHERN INDIA  
(MUGHAL, PROBABLY LAHORE OR KASHMIR),  
17TH CENTURY

HEIGHT: 16.4 CM  
WIDTH: 17.6 CM

A tile in the *cuerda seca* technique painted in warm, vibrant glazes of purplish cobalt blue, soft aubergine, ochre-tinged orange and bright yellow on a rich green ground, highlighted by white and outlined by the dark manganese brown of the *cuerda seca* technique. The elegant design, constructed as a series of intersecting diagonals, consists of scrolling arabesques, vines and stalks from which sprout variegated leaves, buds and stylised, composite flowers of intoxicating variety and imagination.

To the lower right corner of the tile is a large overblown flower-head with yellow serrated petals, interleaved orange petals and a superimposed luxuriant pomegranate in aubergine to the centre. From the orange and yellow arabesque in the lower left corner of the tile grows an elegant stylised flower on an aubergine stalk,

with cobalt blue outer petals outlined in white flanking yellow petals and an orange centre. The aubergine stalk continues and divides above the flower, with an orange leaf to the right and a serrated yellow leaf resembling a split-leaf palmette to the left.

Scrolling into the centre of the design from the upper edge of the tile and interlacing with the aubergine stalk is an elaborate, blade-like blue and orange arabesque, resembling part of a split-leaf palmette in its stylised ornamentation. Overlapping petals, cusps and curling flower buds wrap themselves around the sword shape of the arabesque, softening its sharp, spiky outline with florid curves. Scrolling in a curve across the top edge of the tile is an orange vine connecting a yellow serrated leaf to the right corner with a blue petal with white outlines to the left.

Mughal tiles are extremely rare. Tiles in the *cuerda seca* technique formed part of the decorative schemes of Mughal monuments, and were set in both brick and stone buildings. Examples include the mosque and tomb of the saint Shah Madani at But Kadal, Zabidal, near Srinagar in Kashmir; the tomb of Zaina-ul-Abidin's mother also at Srinagar; and Miriam Zamani's mosque at Lahore.

The tiles at the tomb of Shah Madani show similarities of design to the present example. The tomb of Shah Madani dates from the mid fifteenth century but was refurbished in the seventeenth century by a Mughal

nobleman during the reign of Shah Jahan, when tiles in the *cuerda seca* technique were installed.

Tiles of similar type can also be seen at the tomb of the saint Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki at Mahrauli near Delhi, where they are to be found on the west wall of the enclosure. These were installed during the reign of Shah Jahan, whose love of floral motifs profoundly influenced the designs of the period.

It is likely that Lahore was one of the principal centres of Mughal *cuerda seca* tile manufacture, but tiles in the *cuerda seca* technique were also probably made in Kashmir for the monuments constructed there.

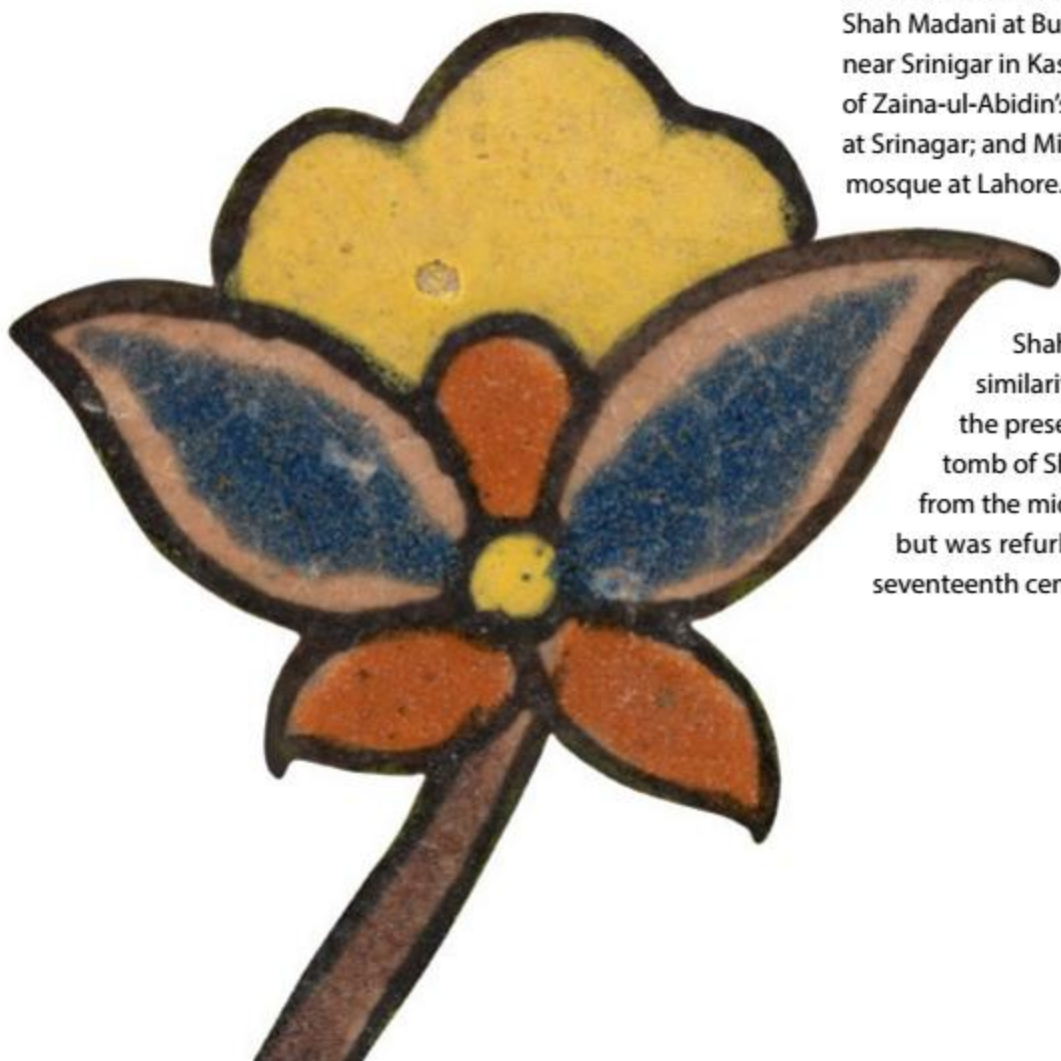
A group of thirteen Mughal tiles from the tomb of the saint Shah Madani at But Kadal, Zabidal, near Srinagar in Kashmir, from the donation of Jean et Krishnâ Riboud in the Musée Guimet is published in Amina Okada, *L'Inde des Princes: La donation Jean et Krishnâ Riboud*, 2000, pp. 128-133. See in particular the tile on a green ground illustrated to the lower right of p. 132 which has a larger but similar blade-like arabesque, and the tile with a yellow and green ground to the upper right of p. 133, also with a similar arabesque.

## Provenance:

Madame Krishnâ Riboud, Paris

## Literature:

Ram Chandra Kak, *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir*, 1933, pp. 91-93.  
Tanvir Hasan, "Ceramics of Sultanate India", in *South Asian Studies*, no. 11, 1995, pp. 83-106.  
Tariq Masud, "Glazed Tiles from Mian Mir's Complex", in *Lahore Museum Bulletin*, vol. 2, no. 1, Jan-June 1989, pp. 45-51.













# SHAH ISMA'IL HUNTING

IRAN (QAJAR), CIRCA 1880

HEIGHT: 44.5 CM

WIDTH: 44.5 CM

A stone-paste tile with moulded decoration, underglaze-painted in shades of cobalt blue, olive green, turquoise, pink, gold, black and white under a thick gleaming translucent glaze.

The main field, contained within a quatrefoil cartouche on a cobalt blue ground, depicts a condensed captured moment of Qajar noblemen on horseback engaged in hunting pursuits. Six gentlemen, each riding magnificent white stallions, are portrayed in the middle of the action. To the top left, a man holds his pink tunic closed with one hand as he raises his sword with the other; ready to swing at an unknown target. His white face shows an impassive expression as he gazes forwards.

The largest horseback rider, one of a group of three to the right side of the field, wears an unbuttoned pink tunic with floral rosette patterns and sits on a shawl decorated with *boteh* designs. He wears a turquoise hat, the vibrant colour having bled onto his white face, a common issue with copper oxide once fired. He sports a large moustache, his eyes focused on the prize before him. In his right hand he holds a bow whilst his left arm is bent double, having just released an arrow that has found its target in the side of an olive coloured deer, complete with small antlers and a panicked expression.

Above him floats a small cusped white cartouche containing the Persian inscription:

"Shah Isma'il Khata'i"

This was the pen name of the Safavid Shah Isma'il I, the founder of the Safavid dynasty, who ruled from 1501 to 1524. The largest of the six noblemen depicted on this tile, clothed in a pink tunic, is therefore probably Shah Isma'il, framed to either side by slightly smaller figures on horseback, one who seems to be observing the spectacle stony-faced rather than taking part, and the other who looks somewhat mournful in his vibrant turquoise coat.

Shah Isma'il has stuck his spear into the rump of an olive coloured Asian lion, who has turned to face his tormentor, mouth open and teeth bared.

To the left of the cartouche a gentleman in a turquoise tunic on horseback holds a falcon in his right hand. He faces inwards surveying the scene before him. The falcon, a status symbol denoting the nobility of its owner was used for hunting small game such as rabbits. Below him, a horse and rider are in hot pursuit accompanied by a spotted hunting dog. The hunter wears an olive tunic and sports a turquoise hat. He holds a sword menacingly in his left hand, and is captured mid-swing, just as the sword is about to make contact with a large black boar, frightened and running for its life below, seemingly

chased by one of the other hunters towards him. Decorating the cobalt blue ground to the top of the main field are white scrolling bands, and further down are floating stylised floral sprays.

The thick gold cartouche border is edged in white with further white roundels punctuating the ground. Split-leaf arabesques decorate the border and collect *en masse* to each corner, highlighted by the vibrant turquoise ground surrounding the cartouche. The tile is framed to each edge by a continuous gold border of meandering vines and tendrils.

## Acknowledgement:

We would like to thank Will Kwiatkowski for his kind reading of the text within the cartouche.













### MUSICIAN AND COURTIER IN A GARDEN

IRAN (QAJAR, PROBABLY ISFAHAN),  
CIRCA 1880

HEIGHT: 40 CM  
WIDTH: 51 CM

A stone-paste tile with moulded decoration, underglaze-painted in shades of cobalt blue, turquoise, aubergine, olive green, black and white under a gleaming translucent glaze. The design features a landscape with a single musician performing under a tree, flanked to either side by three courtiers. A scrolling floral border frames the edges of the tile.

The focal point of the tile is the single musician to the centre of the group. He rests against the trunk of a large tree, his legs crossed and looking down and to his right. He wears a white tunic with decorative aubergine splashes, olive green trousers and a turquoise shawl

draped over his head. He also wears a large jewelled necklace. In both hands he holds a green coloured guitar which he is in the midst of playing. His eyes seem to have been drawn to a kneeling female courtier beside him, dressed in a vibrant turquoise tunic above a white skirt with splashes of aubergine. She also has wrapped around her a large aubergine sash and looks up to receive the loving gaze of her admirer. Between them hangs a birdcage, complete with a small bird inside. This could perhaps be an allegorical reference to the love between the couple, suggesting maybe that like the caged bird, their love is controlled or even prevented by an external force. The olive green tree contains large stylised aubergine rosette sprays and blue leaves.

To the left of the main field, a further pair of courtiers gaze into each other's eyes. The man wears an olive green tunic and short trousers with a















turquoise overcoat. He wears a large aubergine hat and carries a tall ewer in his right hand. His left arm, bent at the elbow, gestures towards his companion standing next to him, her arms draped around his shoulders. He carries a large aubergine coloured vase in his hand. The lady wears a white and aubergine striped tunic, her head covered with a green shawl. To the right of the musician are a further three standing courtiers. One has a shawl around her head, and holds a large vase in her raised hand. She wears a white and aubergine striped coat above a turquoise skirt. A further female courtier holds a large pot and cover and to the far right, a male courtier stands observing the scene, wearing a vibrant turquoise tunic and skirt below a white and aubergine splashed coat. An olive turban sits atop his head.

All seven figures are set against a rich cobalt blue ground, almost hovering, as they stand above a strip of dense foliage and vibrant floral rosettes, in colours of turquoise, manganese and olive green which all emerge from repeated rounded rock formations. Further elaborate floral sprays of various sizes decorate the ground around them; and above, a group of impressive Armenian churches, possibly referencing those in Isfahan, are scattered across the

horizon beneath swirling clouds. A meandering border of serrated cobalt leaves punctuated by symmetrical rosettes on a white slip ground frames the tile to all sides.

Similar large tiles of courtiers in landscapes can also be found in the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, Qatar, and the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.

Provenance:  
Christine Gilbertson, Rutland Gate, London









37

### LOVERS IN A GARDEN

IRAN (QAJAR, PROBABLY ISFAHAN),  
CIRCA 1880

HEIGHT: 33 CM  
WIDTH: 38 CM

A rectangular stone-paste tile with moulded decoration, underglaze-painted in shades of cobalt blue, turquoise, aubergine, pink, black and white under a gleaming translucent glaze.

The focal point of the tile is a group of four splendidly dressed figures, in two confronting pairs. To the left, a lady holds a large pink floral spray. She wears a flowing light pink dress with small floral designs underneath a darker tunic and a large blue shawl which covers her head falling down around her body. She has a green sash tied around her waist and holds a turquoise parasol above her head, shielding herself from the sun as she faces her lover to the right. Her outstretched left hand has received a large floral spray from her admirer. Acting possibly as a chaperone, a female courtier stands watchfully beside her, dressed in an off-white tunic and coat, decorated with small blue rosettes within pink borders and with a yellow shawl draped over her head and body featuring *cintamani* designs, her hands



clasped together and holding a large blue bowl, possibly of sweets. Both ladies wear typical Qajar court costume.

Facing his lover, the elegantly attired man wears a similar coat and skirt, covered with stylised rosettes and diamonds. He reaches proudly out to his beloved with his left arm bent at the elbow, hand clasped to his chest. He also sports a curved sword or *talwar*, which hangs from his belt. To his right, a male courtier in a long white coat decorated to the bottom with *boteh* sprays looks on, ready to assist his master.

All four figures are set against a rich cobalt blue ground, almost hovering, as they stand above a strip of dense foliage and vibrant floral rosettes, in colours of turquoise, manganese, pink and cobalt blue. Further elaborate floral sprays decorate the ground around them; and above, a group of impressive Armenian churches, possibly referencing those in Isfahan, are scattered across the horizon. A meandering border frames the tile to the top of the main field. It features a central boldly painted rosette surrounded by leafy cobalt vines punctuated by multi-coloured floral sprays and two pairs of confronted birds on a white slip ground.

A tile in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, depicts a similar scene. The website description, prepared by Jennifer Scarce, tells us that the ladies also wear typical Qajar costume, described as long-sleeved jackets with waist peplums worn over long bell-shaped skirts and straight-legged trousers. The male courtier wears a coiled seventeenth century late Safavid style turban and a Qajar style jacket. His retainer wears a plain seventeenth century style knee-length coat and Safavid turban. The men in our tile also wear late Safavid turbans in combination with their Qajar outfits. Therefore in Qajar tiles we find a fantastical melange of periods in the depiction of court dress. In the background of the Victoria and Albert Museum tile are three Armenian churches and a bridge.<sup>1</sup> Similar tiles can also be found in the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, Qatar, and the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.

Provenance:  
Christine Gilbertson, Rutland Gate, London

Acknowledgement:  
We would like to thank Jennifer Scarce for her expert advice.

Reference:  
1. <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O113643/tile-unknown/>











# LOVERS SEATED IN A GARDEN

IRAN (QAJAR, PROBABLY ISFAHAN),  
CIRCA 1880

HEIGHT: 33.5 CM

WIDTH: 32.3 CM

A stone-paste tile with moulded decoration, underglaze-painted in shades of cobalt blue, turquoise, green, aubergine, pink, black and white under a gleaming translucent glaze.

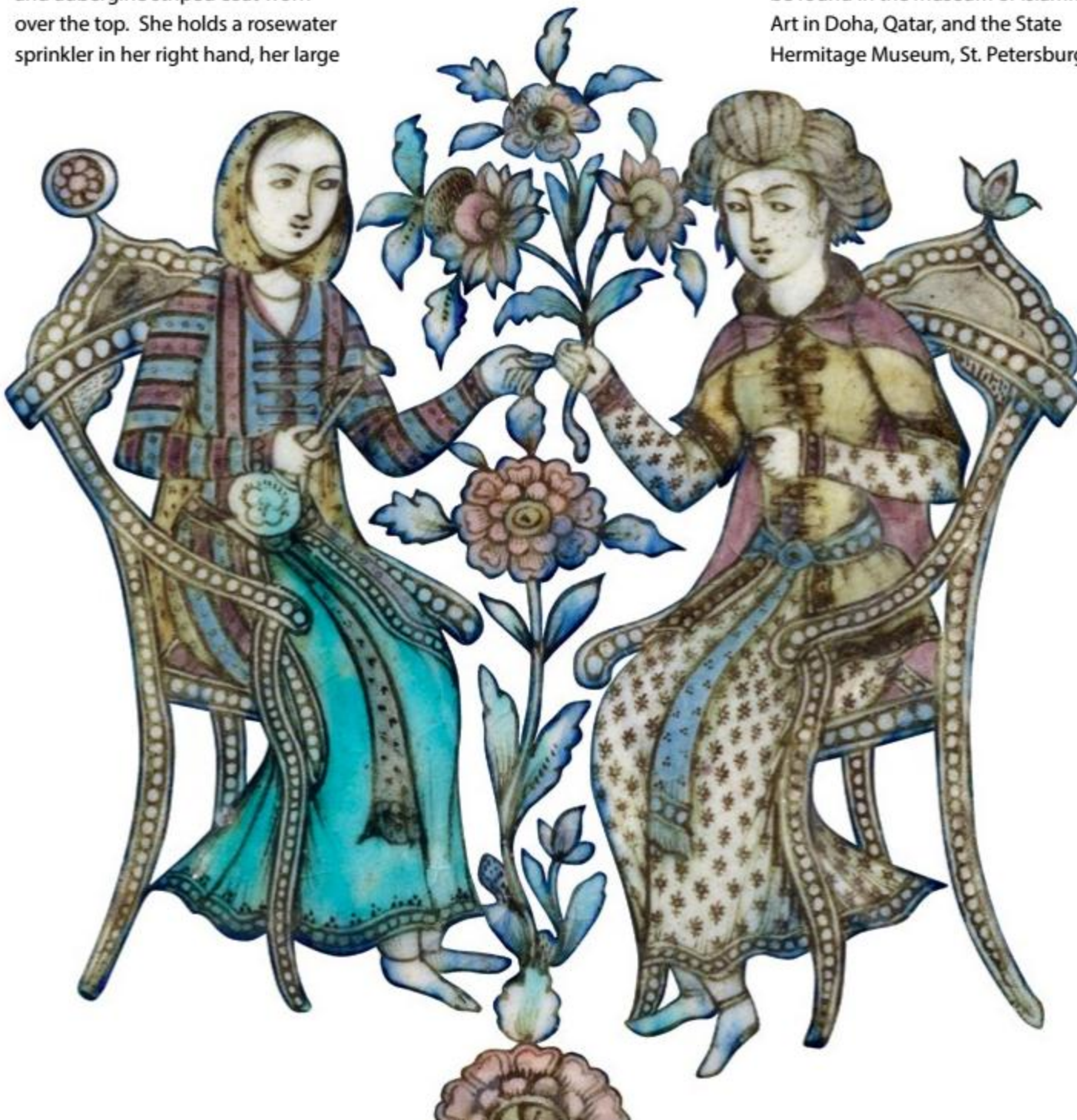
The focal point of the tile is a group of four splendidly dressed figures, two lovers seated to the centre and two standing attendants flanking them to either side. The four figures are all the same height even though the lovers are seated, the artist having used his artistic licence to subtly increase their size so that the servants do not have a greater visual presence. Seated to the left, the lady wears a yellow scarf over her head, a cobalt tunic and turquoise skirt below, with a patterned blue and aubergine striped coat worn over the top. She holds a rosewater sprinkler in her right hand, her large

round face smiling slightly as the outstretched left hand receives a large floral spray from her admirer.

Acting possibly as a chaperone, a female courtier stands watchfully beside her, wearing a brown tunic and patterned billowing trousers. Her attention has however been drawn by something out of sight to the left of the tile. Both ladies wear typical Qajar court costume. Facing his lover, the elegantly attired seated man wears an olive green tunic below a red cloak, patterned trousers and sleeves and reaches proudly out with a floral gift to his beloved. He wears an olive green late Safavid turban in combination with his Qajar outfit. His left arm is bent at the elbow, hand clasped to his chest. To his right, a standing male courtier with arms crossed, wearing a pink tunic and turquoise trousers looks on, ready to assist his master. All four figures are set against a rich cobalt blue ground, as they stand or sit within

a strip of foliage and vibrant floral rosettes. A further strip of large and elaborate floral sprays frame the figures below; and above, a group of mosques, possibly referencing those in Isfahan, are scattered across the horizon. A meandering border of leafy cobalt vines punctuated by multi-coloured rosettes and two pairs of confronted birds on a white slip ground frames the tile to the top of the main field.

A tile in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, depicts a similar scene of two lovers and their attendants standing in a landscape. The website description, prepared by Jennifer Scarce, tells us that here, the ladies also wear typical Qajar costume, described as long-sleeved jackets with waist peplums worn over long bell-shaped skirts and straight-legged trousers. Therefore in Qajar tiles we find a fantastical melange of periods in the depiction of court dress. Similar tiles can also be found in the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, Qatar, and the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.







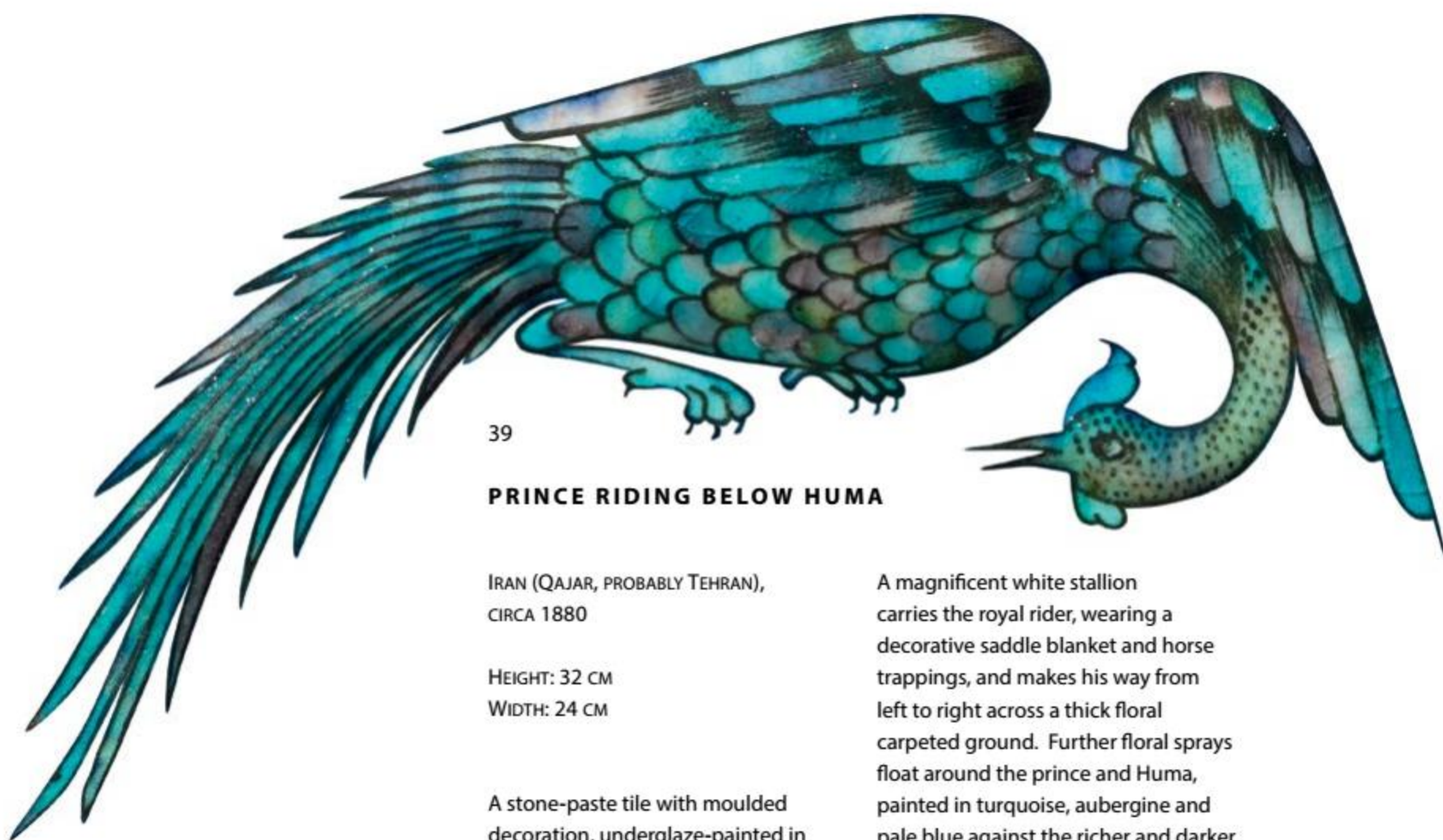












39

## PRINCE RIDING BELOW HUMA

IRAN (QAJAR, PROBABLY TEHRAN),  
CIRCA 1880

HEIGHT: 32 CM  
WIDTH: 24 CM

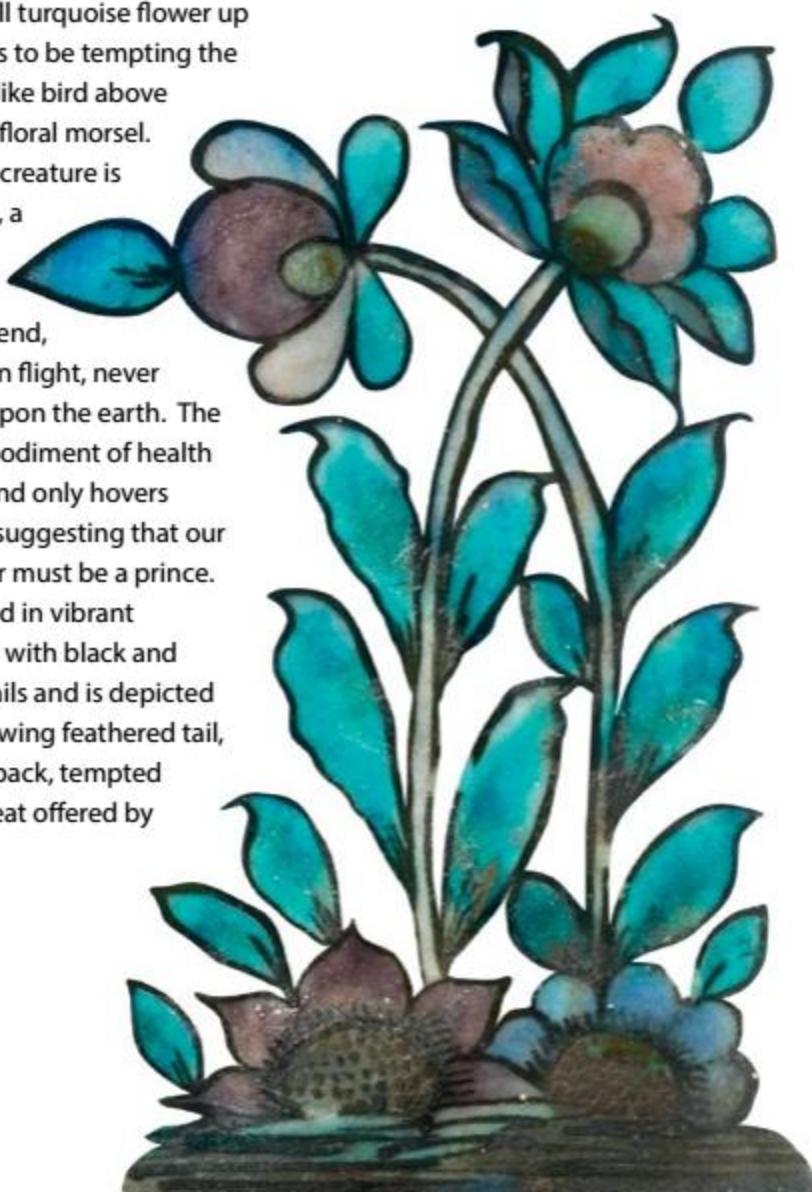
A stone-paste tile with moulded decoration, underglaze-painted in shades of cobalt blue, turquoise, aubergine, pink, black and white and under a gleaming translucent glaze.

The focal point of the tile is a central figure on horseback. He wears a pink tunic with aubergine borders underneath a short-sleeved cobalt blue coat covered in decorative crosses. He wears a large aubergine, blue and pink turban with a *cintamani* design and in his left hand he holds a small turquoise flower up high. He seems to be tempting the large phoenix-like bird above with this small floral morsel.

The fantastical creature is possibly Huma, a mythical bird from Iranian poetry and legend, who is always in flight, never once landing upon the earth. The bird is the embodiment of health and strength and only hovers above royalty, suggesting that our horseback rider must be a prince. Huma is painted in vibrant turquoise hues with black and aubergine details and is depicted with a large flowing feathered tail, the neck bent back, tempted by the small treat offered by the prince.

A magnificent white stallion carries the royal rider, wearing a decorative saddle blanket and horse trappings, and makes his way from left to right across a thick floral carpeted ground. Further floral sprays float around the prince and Huma, painted in turquoise, aubergine and pale blue against the richer and darker cobalt ground. Two small aubergine hills and scrolling clouds can also be seen on the horizon along with a single stylised mosque. A white border of blue arabesque vines around a central floral spray frames the scene to the top of the tile.

A similar Qajar tile of a man on horseback beneath a Huma can be seen in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Ref. 83.1.67.









## MARVELS OF THINGS CREATED

IRAN (QAJAR, TEHRAN), CIRCA 1880

HEIGHT: 26.5 CM

WIDTH: 26.5 CM

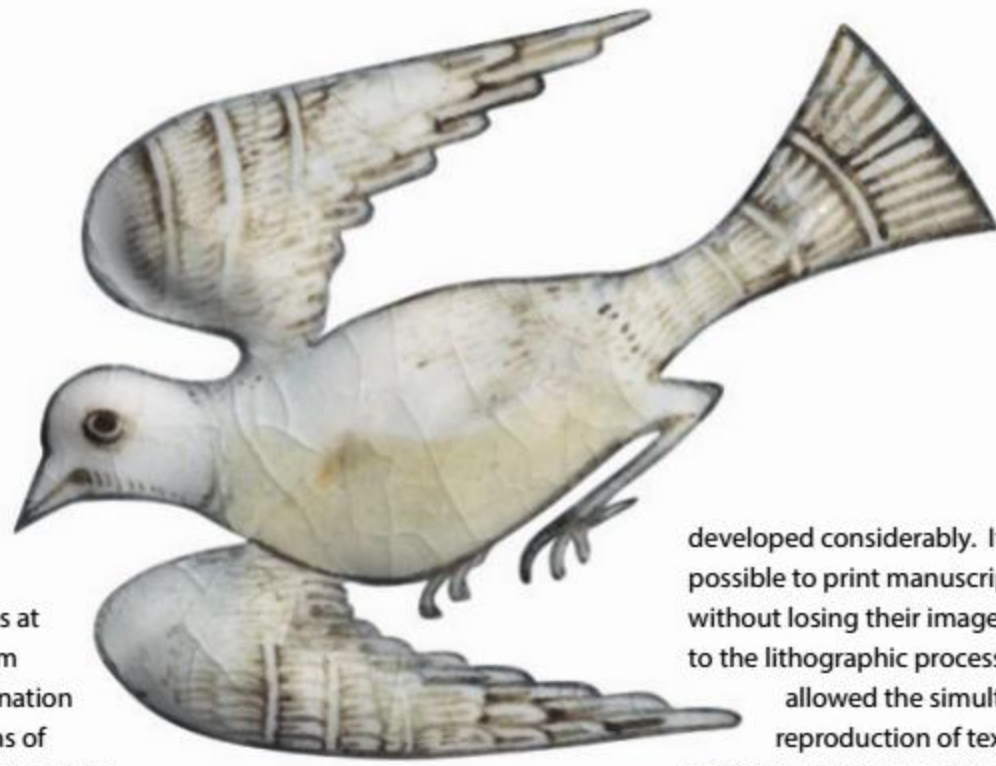
A stone-paste tile with moulded decoration, underglaze-painted in black, grey and crisp white against a cobalt blue ground under a gleaming translucent glaze. The delightful and unusual design depicts strutting cockerels and a chicken pecking the ground while above doves swoop dramatically in the sky. The scene is set in landscape dotted with flowering shrubs on rocky outcrops.

This extraordinary tile may be compared to a group of six square Qajar tiles in the Musée du Louvre in Paris which illustrates the work of the Iranian born scholar Abu Yahya Zakariya' ibn Muhammad al-Qazwini (1203-1283) entitled *'Aja'ib al-makhlūqat wa-ghara'ib al-mawjudat* or "Marvels of Things Created and Miraculous Aspects of Things Existing". This thirteenth century Arabic text was very popular and remains the most celebrated cosmographic work of the Islamic world. The text is preserved in many copies, often illustrated, and translated into Persian and Turkish.

Al-Qazwini was a Persian physician, astronomer, geographer, legal expert, judge and proto-science fiction writer, who after extensive travels through Mesopotamia and Syria, settled in Baghdad, where he entered the circle of the Governor of Baghdad, 'Ata-Malik Juwayni, to whom the *'Aja'ib al-makhlūqat* was dedicated.<sup>1</sup> Al-Qazwini was also well-known for his geographical dictionary, *Athar al-bilad wa-akhbar al-'ibad* (Monument of Places and History of God's Bondsmen), and his Arabic science fiction fable, *Awaj bin Anfaq*, about a man who travelled to earth from a distant planet.<sup>2</sup>

The fantastic images on our tile and on the six closely related tiles at the Louvre are drawn from Al-Qazwini's fertile imagination and inventive descriptions of the marvellous and the miraculous. The Louvre tiles were exhibited and published in Marthe Bernus Taylor and Cécile Jail (eds.), *L'étrange et le Merveilleux en terres d'Islam*, 2001, pp. 46-47, cat. no. 28. One of the six Louvre tiles (MAO 1193) has a design with a dog, hedgehog, scorpion and tortoise. In our 2011 Simon Ray *Indian & Islamic Works of Art* catalogue, pp. 52-53, we published a tile with the dog, hedgehog, scorpion and tortoise design. This has even finer detailing than the Louvre example, with a heightened colour range that includes delicate shades of green, turquoise, pink, brown, black and crisp white against a rich cobalt blue ground.

As described by Annabelle Collinet in the exhibition catalogue and on the Louvre website, the six Louvre tiles depict animals and monstrous creatures including a pack of baboons with prominent red buttocks (MAO 1195); a pair of confronted rabbits flanking a tortoise with slithering snakes above (MAO 1196); a flock of birds including a pigeon and a pelican swallowing a fish (MAO 1191); she-devils or ogresses with women's breasts and goats' feet wearing short flared skirts (MAO 1194); and their equally fearsome husbands, three *divs*, dark, evil demons with tails, spotted skins, horns and moustaches, wearing short skirts and armed with clubs (MAO 1192).<sup>3</sup> The depictions are full of wit and humour, and use multiple perspectives and viewpoints skilfully combined to animate the surface of the tiles. For example, in the tile with the dog and the bear or hedgehog, these are viewed in profile, while the scorpion and tortoise are viewed from above.



In the present tile, the chickens and two of the fluttering birds are viewed in profile, while the bird swooping upwards and the bird taking a nosedive are seen as if from above. In addition, the bird climbing skywards is not moulded in relief in contrast to the other moulded birds. This flat treatment, together with its small size, conveys the effect of the bird being situated in the far distance in a recessed picture plane.

Collinet observes at the time of writing that no other group of tiles similar to the six tiles at the Louvre are known, so the discovery of the present tile is an exciting addition to the small number of existing tiles illustrating the *'Aja'ib al-makhlūqat*. We know of another design which has come on the market depicting peacocks strutting through a garden. Sophie Makariou has also kindly informed us of another happy addition to this exceptional group, a recent donation to the Louvre of a tile depicting five camels at rest (MOA 2176), bringing the total number of designs, including ours, to nine.<sup>4</sup> Though the present design may be related to the tile with birds in the Louvre, its configuration is unique and we have never seen this design at auction, offered on the art market or published in a museum collection.

According to Collinet, the style of the figures on the tiles is very similar to the illustrations in a lithographic edition of the *'Aja'ib al-makhlūqat* that appeared in the city of Tehran in 1866.<sup>5</sup> Following the first appearance of lithographic publications in Iran in 1843, the technique used for printing impressions of famous literary texts

developed considerably. It became possible to print manuscripts without losing their images thanks to the lithographic process, which allowed the simultaneous reproduction of text and miniatures, thus preserving the page layout of illustrated manuscripts.<sup>6</sup> The master tile-makers of this group must have had access to this lithographic edition, which provided the inspiration for tiles remarkably different from the courtly and historical narratives, hunts and equestrian scenes seen on most Qajar tiles from the second half of the nineteenth century.

## Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank Sophie Makariou, Rosène Declementi and Jennifer Scarce for their expert advice.

## References:

1. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zakariya\\_al-Qazwini](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zakariya_al-Qazwini)
2. Ibid.
3. Annabelle Collinet in Marthe Bernus Taylor and Cécile Jail (eds.), *L'étrange et le Merveilleux en terres d'Islam*, 2001, pp. 46-47, cat. no. 28. The Louvre exhibition devotes a section to works of art and manuscripts relating to Al-Qazwini and the literature of the marvellous. The tiles are also published in the literature listed below.
4. Personal communication with Sophie Makariou. The camel tile was acquired by the donors from the Etude Tajan auction at the Hôtel Drouot, Paris, *Art d'Orient, tableaux orientalistes*, 14th-15th May 2001, p. 99, lot 281.
5. Collinet, 2001, p. 46.
6. Ibid.

## Literature:

Sophie Makariou (ed.), *Nouvelles acquisitions, Arts de l'Islam: 1988-2001*, 2002, pp. 109-111, cat. no. 66.  
*Le Petit Journal des grandes expositions*, 23rd April to 23rd July 2001, no. 331.









## MARVELS OF THINGS CREATED

IRAN (QAJAR, TEHRAN), CIRCA 1880

HEIGHT: 25 CM

WIDTH: 26 CM

A stone-paste tile with moulded decoration, finely underglaze-painted in black, grey, aubergine, turquoise and crisp white against a cobalt blue ground under a gleaming translucent glaze. The delightful and unusual design depicts a group of four ducks in a landscape dotted with flowering shrubs on rocky outcrops below distant mountains.

Three of the ducks are painted in profile while the fourth faces forward, standing upright with wings outstretched and head tilted to the right. The ducks are painted in hues of aubergine, white and grey to their bodies, the colours used to texture and detail feathers as well as further mould the shapes that already stand proud in relief by shading and contouring. The turquoise heads and aubergine beaks are defined by black detailing. The differing sizes of the ducks and their placement within the picture plane create depth to the composition, further enhanced by the small mountains and clouds to the top indicating vast distances in the panorama. At the bottom is a stream that flows from left to right. A masterly stroke is the way the outlines of the toes and feet of the ducks fade as they step deeper into the stream.

This extraordinary tile may be compared to six square Qajar tiles in the Musée du Louvre in Paris which illustrate the work of the Iranian born scholar Abu Yahya Zakariya' ibn Muhammad al-Qazwini (1203-1283) entitled *'Aja'ib al-makhlūqat wa-ghara'ib al-mawjudat* or "Marvels of Things Created and Miraculous Aspects of Things Existing". This thirteenth century Arabic text was very popular and remains the most celebrated cosmographic work of the Islamic world. The text is preserved in many copies, often illustrated, and translated into Persian and Turkish.

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wearing short skirts and armed with clubs (MAO 1192).<sup>3</sup> The depictions are full of wit and humour, and use multiple perspectives and viewpoints skilfully combined to animate the surface of the tiles.

Collinet observes at the time of writing that no other group of tiles similar to the six tiles at the Louvre are known, so the discovery of the present tile is an exciting addition to the small number of existing tiles illustrating the *'Aja'ib al-makhlūqat*. We know of another design which has come on the market depicting peacocks strutting through a garden. Sophie Makariou has also kindly informed us of another addition to this group, a donation to the Louvre of a tile depicting five camels at rest (MOA 2176), bringing the number of designs, including ours, to nine, while the equally unusual Qajar tile in cat. no. 40 brings the total of known designs to ten.<sup>4</sup> As with cat. no. 40 the configuration is unique and we have never seen this design published or in a museum. An added point of interest is a tile in a private London collection with a design of camels similar to the Louvre but with variant placements of the camels, their postures and their heads, demonstrating that each tile was individually crafted.

According to Collinet, the style of the figures on the tiles is very similar to the illustrations in a lithographic edition of the *'Aja'ib al-makhlūqat* that appeared in the city of Tehran in 1866.<sup>5</sup> Following the

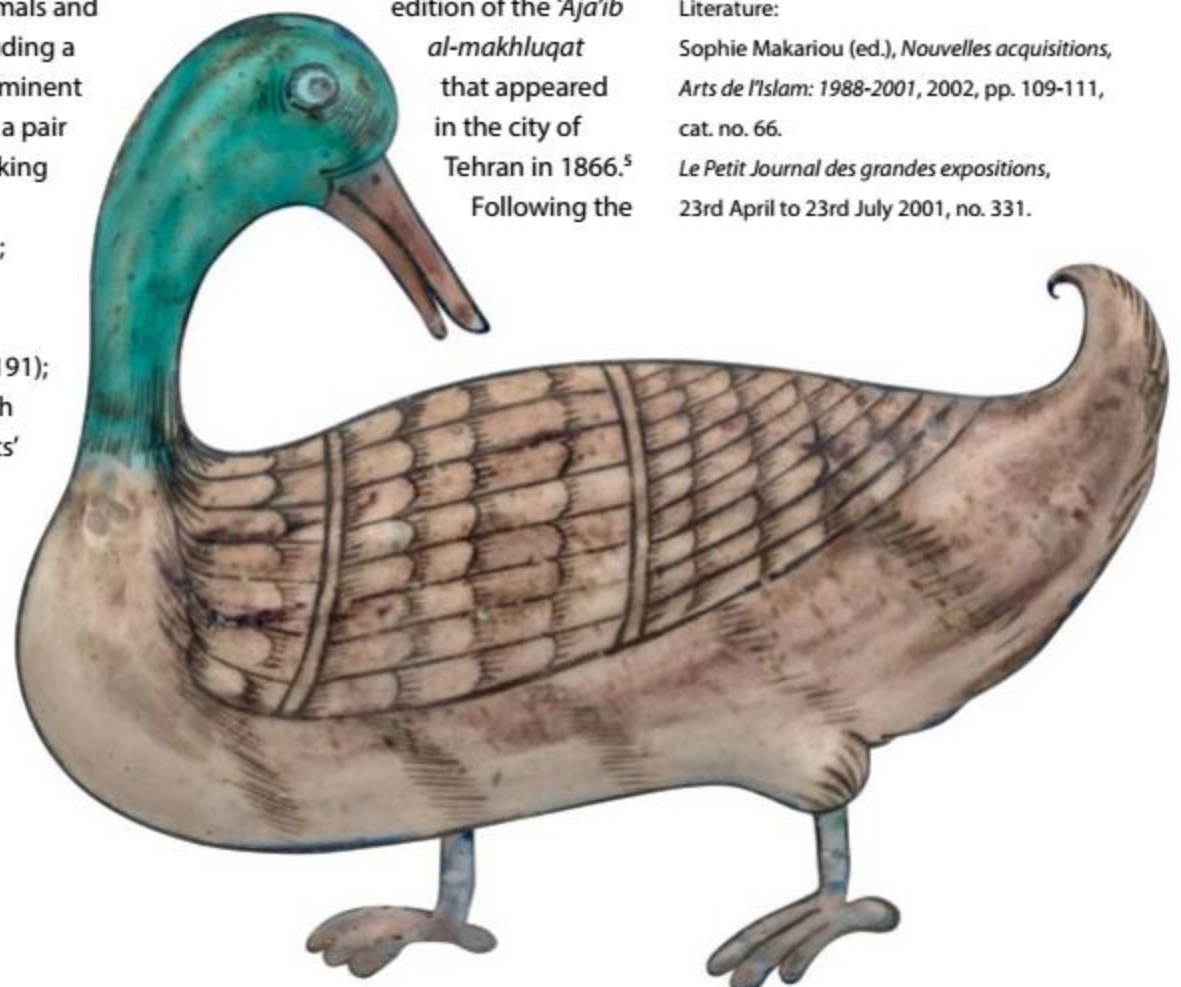
first appearance of lithographic publications in Iran in 1843, the technique used for printing impressions of famous literary texts developed considerably. It became possible to print manuscripts without losing their images thanks to the lithographic process, which allowed the simultaneous reproduction of text and miniatures, thus preserving the page layout of illustrated manuscripts.<sup>6</sup> The master tile-makers of this group must have had access to this lithographic edition, which provided the inspiration for tiles remarkably different from the courtly and historical narratives, hunts and equestrian scenes seen on most Qajar tiles from the second half of the nineteenth century.

## References:

1. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zakariya\\_al-Qazwini](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zakariya_al-Qazwini)
2. Ibid.
3. Annabelle Collinet in Marthe Bernus Taylor and Cécile Jail (eds.), *L'étrange et le Merveilleux en terres d'Islam*, 2001, pp. 46-47, cat. no. 28. The Louvre exhibition devotes a section to works of art and manuscripts relating to Al-Qazwini and the literature of the marvellous. The tiles are also published in the literature listed below.
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5. Collinet, 2001, p. 46.
6. Ibid.

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- Le Petit Journal des grandes expositions*, 23rd April to 23rd July 2001, no. 331.









## TEAR-SHAPED BIDRI TRAY

INDIA (DECCAN, BIDAR), 17TH CENTURY

HEIGHT: 35 CM

WIDTH: 29 CM

DEPTH: 3 CM

An exceptional tear-shaped *bidri* tray inlaid with silver in the *aftabi* technique of black arabesque patterns against a gleaming silver ground, heightened with delicate details of brass. The centres, petals and veins of the black *bidri* lotus blossoms and serrated leaves are defined by brass inlays in the *bidri* techniques of *tarkashi* (wire inlay) and *tehnishan* (where the inlay is flush to the surface). Just opening buds and flowers, split-leaves, folded leaves, coils, tendrils and spiralling vines jostle for space and interlace on the dense but impeccably controlled and mellifluous surface of this large tray.

Defining the edges of the central pattern and the curving rim are margins of silver dots laid in quatrefoil configuration against strips of black *bidri*. We have never encountered this highly unusual tear-shape for a tray in any museum collection or publication on Indian metalwork.

According to Mark Zebrowski who publishes this unique tray in *Gold, Silver & Bronze from Mughal India*, 1997, pp. 252 and 259, pl. 431: "This tear-shaped tray stands apart from other seventeenth century *bidri* pieces. Its great sweep of arabesque in the *aftabi* technique, its discreet inlays of brass, its broad cavetto and its fusion of powerful, simple form with extremely fine ornament is unparalleled. Stylistically it bears some relationship to the ewer in plates 423 and 225 but its design is grander and more assured."

The name for the *aftabi* technique comes from the Persian word for sun (lustre/shine). The term denotes the extensive amount of silver used in the ground of the tray. The pattern emerges in reverse from the normal *bidri* technique of silver motifs against a black ground; here the motifs are black, the glittering silver ground cut through to reveal the black base metal alloy beneath. The *aftabi* technique, the most difficult to execute in the *bidri* technical repertoire, was more expensive and fragile than silver inlays into a *bidri* ground and created a sense of extreme refinement, akin to that of Deccani painting.

Writing of the *aftabi* (sun-like) technique, which he informs us is also called *mahtabi* (moon-like), Jagdish Mittal observes that *aftabi* work is infinitely more demanding than *tarkashi* and *tehnishan* work.<sup>1</sup> It needs great precision in cutting a stencil of the pattern in the metal sheet, uniformly chiselling out its outer area, and ensuring flawless registration of the metal to be overlaid around the pattern. Since this work process is time-consuming, and hence expensive, *aftabi* objects were produced only by highly skilled artisans for wealthy and discerning patrons and the number of available *aftabi bidri* objects is very small.

A bell-shaped *hookah* in the *aftabi* technique is illustrated in Mark Zebrowski, *Gold, Silver & Bronze in Mughal India*, 1997, pp. 237 and 240, pl. 398.

## Provenance:

Anthony Jack, London 1974

Bashir Mohamed, London, 1974-2017

"Tobi" Jack was a tribal art dealer from New Zealand who moved to London, from his

native Auckland in the early 1960s. He lived in London for fifty years, where he gained a reputation for scholarship and detailed research into the history and cultural significance of the eclectic range of art he sold, all chosen for their beauty, power and cultural resonance. His love of ethnographic artefacts began in his youth where his appreciation of objects from the Solomon Islands and other Pacific nations was nurtured by visits to the Auckland Museum. He considered himself a rebel and an outsider and made friends with Maori bikers through whom he gained insight into the heritage and tradition of non-Western cultures. In London he met his American wife Jeri, and together with their son Jason, travelled to North Africa where he found another life-long passion, the culture of the Mahgreb.

One of his first jobs was with a numismatic dealer, which gave him opportunity to explore the coins and currency held at Spink & Son as well as to discover Tibetan art, delighting in its wildness and beauty. He returned several important Maori objects to New Zealand for which he was given the Maori honorific name Te Toki and invested with Maori rank.

Tobi Jack was a good friend of Robert Alderman and Mark Zebrowski who much admired the present tray and published it in his seminal book on Indian metalwork.

As noted by David Levin in the obituary in tribute, from which these notes are abstracted, "Anthony Jack was a man who understood that the appreciation and acquisition of cultural objects are not necessarily about the exploitation of people or the belittling of nations, but another way of celebrating human life and endeavour".

## Published:

Mark Zebrowski, *Gold, Silver & Bronze from Mughal India*, 1997, pp. 252 and 259, pl. 431.

## Reference:

1. Jagdish Mittal, *Bidri Ware and Damascene Work in Jagdish & Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art*, 2001, p. 17.















## GILT-STEEL POWDER FLASK

INDIA (MUGHAL), 17TH CENTURY

HEIGHT: 5.8 CM

WIDTH: 20 CM

DEPTH: 2.9 CM

A gilt-steel powder flask or primer (*barud-dan*) with a crenellated stopper, realistically cast in the shape of a leaping gazelle with outstretched legs forming an elegant bow-shape, the diminutive head of a deer between its rear hooves further attenuating the form. The gazelle wears a simple ring collar and a girdle of trefoil petals around its belly.

Attached to the top of the flask is a brass spanner or lever on a spring mechanism. The spanner also serves as the stopper of the flask. When pressed, the spanner lifts to open a

hole at the end of the lid, releasing the priming powder through the mouth of the gazelle at the tip, and into the flashpan and touchhole of a musket where it is ignited to detonate the charge powder of the gun, causing it to fire. The charge powder is carried in a large powder horn, usually of nautilus shell form, while the priming powder is carried in a small priming flask such as the present example.

Ivory gunpowder flasks and horns from India and Iran integrate animal forms illustrative of hunting scenes. The recurring motif of a leaping antelope, a prize game for a skilled hunter, lends itself to near perfection with its elegant and slender form to the powder horn. Several comparable pieces in ivory are known, some of which can be traced in European inventories to the seventeenth and early eighteenth century.

A particularly elaborate example was in the collection of Prince Elector Johann Georg II of Saxony in 1658, while another in Denmark is noted in an inventory of 1737; see Robert Skelton et al, *The Indian Heritage: Court Life and Arts under Mughal Rule*, 1982, p. 135, nos. 439 and 440.

Despite the strength of steel, ivory and bone were the preferred materials from which such flasks and primers were carved. This is due to the possibility of sparks when steel is struck and the danger of combustion of the gunpowder held within. Thus steel powder horns are comparatively rare.









## SILVER ENAMELLED HOOKAH BASE

INDIA (LUCKNOW), LATE 18TH CENTURY

HEIGHT: 11 CM

DIAMETER: 10.2 CM

A silver bell-shaped *hookah* base, finely enamelled in blue, green and mauve with engraved and black enamelled details and outlines that gleam against the polished silver ground. The shape and design are characteristic of Lucknow metalwork from the late eighteenth century and may be compared with several published examples of silver and silver-gilt bell-shaped *hookah* bases of the same period.

Decorating the body of the *hookah* is a frieze of six oval cartouches, each containing a stylised iris flower flanked by smaller irises just beginning to bloom. The flowers rise from a symmetrical spray of variegated green leaves. At the junctures where the cartouches meet are four-petalled mauve flowers flanked by bifurcated green leaves that enclose green buds. Inscribed within one of the oval cartouches is the name of the owner, possibly a Lucknow nobleman:

*Sayyad Mehdi Nawab Sahib*

The spandrels between the oval cartouches are decorated with birds. In the spandrels above the cartouches, the birds fly from right to left. In the spandrels below, the designs rotate anticlockwise: four birds stand facing right while two birds

flutter as they begin their dramatic ascent towards the sky.

Framing the main frieze are bands of trefoil flowers, or perhaps clusters of three bell-shaped flowers like bluebells, that alternately sprout or dangle from a scrolling vine of tendrils, buds and leaves. These bands, on the shoulder of the *hookah* and on the splayed flare at the bottom, are framed by margins of geometric quatrefoil flowers against a black enamel ground. At the top of the body, just below the neck of the *hookah*, is a band of mauve lappets. The gradually widening neck of the *hookah* is decorated with a frieze of five small oval cartouches

enclosing irises, miniature versions of the cartouches below. Around the base of the neck is a flanged projecting collar decorated with green lappets.

A bell-shaped silver-gilt *hookah* base now at the Victoria and Albert Museum is enamelled in a similar manner, with six cartouches each containing a Hyderabad poppy with a smaller frieze of similar cartouches to the neck. This is published in Mark Zebrowski, *Gold, Silver & Bronze from Mughal India*, 1997, p. 87, pl. 74.

The Hyderabad poppies aptly demonstrate Zebrowski's observation that the Lucknow floral motifs are derived as much from Deccani opulence as they are from Mughal naturalism, and

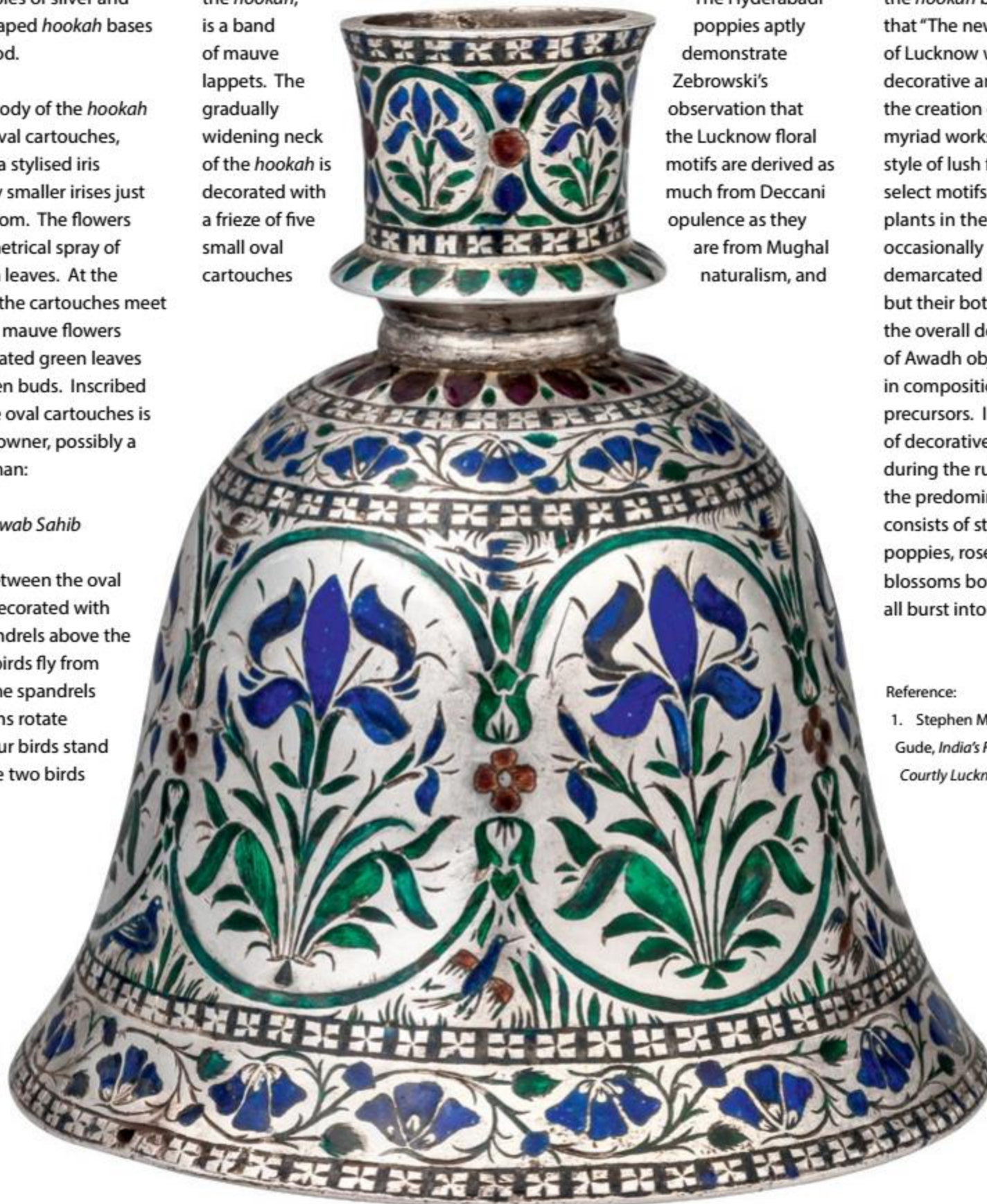
both influences were absorbed into and transformed within the distinctive Lucknow vocabulary.

The Victoria and Albert Museum *hookah* base is also illustrated by Stephen Markel in his chapter, "This Blaze of Wealth and Magnificence: The Luxury Arts of Lucknow" in Stephen Markel with Tushara Bindu Gude, *India's Fabled City: The Art of Courtly Lucknow*, 2011, p. 201, no. 90.

In discussing the ornamentation of the *hookah* base, Markel observes that "The newly envisioned culture of Lucknow was manifested in the decorative arts primarily through the creation of and 'branding' of myriad works with a distinctive style of lush floral imagery and select motifs. Individual flowering plants in the Mughal style occasionally still appear, often demarcated by elegant cartouches, but their botanical structures and the overall decorative programs of Awadh objects are much busier in composition than on Mughal precursors. In the mature style of decorative art that developed during the rule of Asaf al-Daula, the predominant ornamentation consists of stylised irises, lilies, poppies, roses, rosettes and other blossoms both real and imaginary, all burst into bloom."<sup>1</sup>

## Reference:

1. Stephen Markel with Tushara Bindu Gude, *India's Fabled City: The Art of Courtly Lucknow*, 2011, p. 201.









## SILVER-GILT AND ENAMELLED PLATE

INDIA (LUCKNOW), LATE 18TH CENTURY

DIAMETER: 18 CM

A silver-gilt and enamelled plate with a radiating kaleidoscopic design of flowers, leaves and tendrils arranged as scrolling arabesques and floral cartouches of variegated size and configuration. At the centre of the plate is a composite flower-head with a small green flower with serrated petals, framed by a circular band of geometric quatrefoil silver-gilt flowers against a rich blue ground. Split-leaves and buds form a circle of swags around the central motifs that is in turn framed by a meander of five-petalled flowers on a delicate vine framed by repeated quatrefoil borders against a blue ground.

The broad outer band leading to the cavetto is decorated with large cusped cartouches outlined by leaves spaced by smaller quatrefoil

cartouches also composed of leaves. The cartouches and the interstices are densely packed with green leaves and blue and mauve blossoms that jostle for space, yet are immaculately controlled within the vibrant panoply of the design. The floral motifs seem to continuously expand with each cartouche exploding outwards with an exuberant display of floral fireworks.

The silver-gilt quatrefoil border against a blue ground frames the flat centre of the plate as well as the stepped and curved rim which is decorated with a broader version of the floral meander that surrounds the centre. On the reverse of the plate is a central green flower with a mauve centre surrounded by a lace-like lattice of pointed blue petals. The surround is plain to

effectively contrast with this central web as well as the floriated splendour on the front of the plate.

A similar eighteenth century *thali* tray with champlevé enamelling of blue, green and maroon against a silver-gilt ground is illustrated in Christiane Terlinden, *Mughal Silver Magnificence (XVI-XIXth C.)*; *Magnificence de l'Argenterie Moghole (XVI-XIXème S.)*, 1987, p. 109, no. 147. Terlinden attributes this tray to central India or the Deccan but stylistically the tendril decoration on our plate is characteristic of enamelled metalwork from Lucknow. The similarity of the colours is explained by Terlinden's analysis of blue, green and maroon as the colours best suited to silver. According to Terlinden, a number of similarly enamelled gold trays, most of them bearing inscriptions, were brought to Russia by the embassy of Nadir Shah in 1741 and are now in the Oriental Department of the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.

















## GOLD AND ENAMELLED CIGARETTE CASE

INDIA (JAIPUR), CIRCA 1850

HEIGHT: 1.4 CM

WIDTH: 8.8 CM

DEPTH: 6.7 CM

WEIGHT: 130 GRAMS

A gold and enamelled cigarette case of gently curved rectangular form with rounded edges. This elegant accessory takes the same form as a hip flask where the curve makes it sit better when worn on the hip or over the thigh. Should it be slipped into a chest pocket or the lower pocket of a jacket, its presence would also be more discreet than that of a straight boxy shape. The rounded edges further assist in the slipping in and out of pockets with ease, whereas straight edges might catch the cloth. Therefore to maximise smoking pleasure, the form of the case has been carefully considered.

The hinged case opens by means of a snap lock operated by pushing a button against the tension of a flexible gold band just inside. Inside the case are two loops within each half to fasten a string across holding cigarettes in place and preventing them from falling out when the box is held open. A mysterious sharp-edged device in the shape of leaves or a tiny moustache to one edge may be more than decoration and quite possibly some sort of in-built cutter.

All the surfaces of the case are profusely decorated with polychrome enamels in the style characteristic of Jaipur. On the front is a dramatic scene of a yellow tiger attacking a blue gazelle against a red ground within



a cusped cartouche. It is too late for the gazelle to leap for freedom as the tiger is already on the deer's back, mauling it with sharp claws and ferociously sinking in its jagged teeth. In the sky above, a lone white bird flies rapidly away from the scene though the tiger's whiplash tail is dangerously close. The cusped spandrels surrounding the central cartouche are by contrast serenely decorated with floral arabesques amidst which birds flutter peacefully against a green ground.

The convex base of the case is enamelled with a small quatrefoil floral medallion from which radiate leafy sprays and nodding flowers against a crisp white ground, with pairs of birds perched within the floriated splendour. On the edges of the box are trailing bands

of nodding flowers on a sinuous vine, also on a white ground.

Though smoking has a long history in India, commercial cigarettes as we know them were first made only in 1865 by Washington Duke on his 330-acre farm in Raleigh, North Carolina. Duke's cigarettes were hand-rolled and sold to soldiers at the end of the American Civil War. It was not until James Bonsack invented the cigarette-making machine in 1881 that cigarette smoking became widespread and spread worldwide. It is thus unlikely that the present cigarette case would have contained machine-made commercial cigarettes.

The cigarettes contained in the case



would have been a form of the local Indian cigarette, the *beedi* or *bidi*. Tobacco cultivation began in India in the seventeenth century and smoking was done with pipes using admixtures of tobacco, cannabis and various plants for medicinal purposes. The *beedi* is a type of hand-rolled herbal cigarette consisting of cloves, ground betel nut and a rather low proportion of tobacco, though it is the ancestor of the modern cigarette in India. *Beedies* were first created when tobacco workers took the leftovers and rolled them into leaves without paper, like a present day cigarillo. It is thus termed the poor man's cigarette, but the owner of this lavish cigarette case would have been a very wealthy man. Cigarette cases are an unusual form for an enamelled object, though we have encountered visiting card cases with enamelled decoration of animal combats surrounded by birds within dense foliage.

A nineteenth century ivory cigarette box from Delhi has two similarly hinged compartments but very different decoration of oval portrait miniatures in the Company School style on each side, one labelled in English "Lucknow Begum" and the other featuring the "Ex Queen of Delhi". This is illustrated in Bernadette van Gelder, *Traditional Indian Jewellery: Beautiful People*, 2018, pp. 234-235. According to van Gelder, tobacco was introduced to India in 1604 by the Portuguese.

By 1671 the smoking of tobacco, initially in *hookah* pipes, became prevalent despite Jahangir's efforts to suppress it and the Indian tobacco trade flourished.







## SILVER COMMEMORATIVE CASKET

INDIA (TONK), CIRCA 1911

HEIGHT: 17 CM

WIDTH: 44 CM

DEPTH: 29 CM

WEIGHT: 5400 GRAMS

A magnificent silver, silver-gilt and gem-set canted rectangular commemorative casket standing on four ball-and-claw feet. The box is constructed from beaten and folded sheets of silver worked with repoussé, embossing, chiselling, chasing and engraving, with raised areas of silver standing in relief against a punched, textured ground. The inside of the casket is lined with plain polished silver-gilt. The casket has silver handles on the sides.

The casket opens by means of the hinged lid secured by lock and key, the keyhole on the front framed by a raised and cusped escutcheon. The lid is gently curved on the edge, embossed with an outer scrolling border and then ornamented with an applied band of rubies and cabochon turquoises set in the *kundan* technique as trefoil flowers on a vine. This is followed by an inner band of embossed floral scrolls that surround the scallop-shaped coat of arms of the State of Tonk, which stands proud in relief in two tiered layers edged in silver-gilt.

At the centre of the coat of arms is a flower-head set with rubies pierced by an arrow strung from the taut bow from which it is fired. The flower is flanked by two scimitars crossed at their tips and stars set with zircons. A gadrooned border

surrounds the oval medallion that rests on a floral garland set with rubies and blue sapphires. The oval is surmounted by six staffs that radiate against a densely hatched ground. Capping the ensemble is an emblem consisting of a crescent moon set with zircons that supports a five-pointed star with ruby petals and a faceted zircon centre. Ruby buds with blue sapphire leaves stand to attention on either side. Emblazoned across the top is the title TONK STATE and along the bottom is DURBAR'S ENGLISH OFFICE set within the body of a double-headed snake.

The sides of the hinged cover and the body of the casket are conformingly chased with floral scrolls. The casket sits on four large balls held by the powerful talons of a bird of prey. The casket is carried by bale handles with the beaks of bird heads going into the ball sockets.

The casket is presented within the original fitted red velvet case secured with hooks and carried by bale handles. The insides of the case are lined with blue satin and the base with purple velvet in which deep circular recesses hold the ball-and-claw feet.

The case is protected by a canvas cover fastened by loops and round toggle buttons. Pinned by large safety pins to the canvas cover is an old handwritten label.

Inside the casket is another label handwritten by the owner himself:

Captain Christopher Soames  
The Indian Casket with Precious  
Stones surmounted on top given  
to me by the late Lord Hardinge  
of Penshurst.

"As a memento"

On the reverse of the label is his wife Mary's name and their country house address:

Mrs Soames, Sheffield Park,  
Uckfield, Sussex.

The label on the canvas cover reiterates the note inside the box.

Provenance:

Given to Captain Christopher Granville  
Soames by Lord Hardinge of Penshurst.

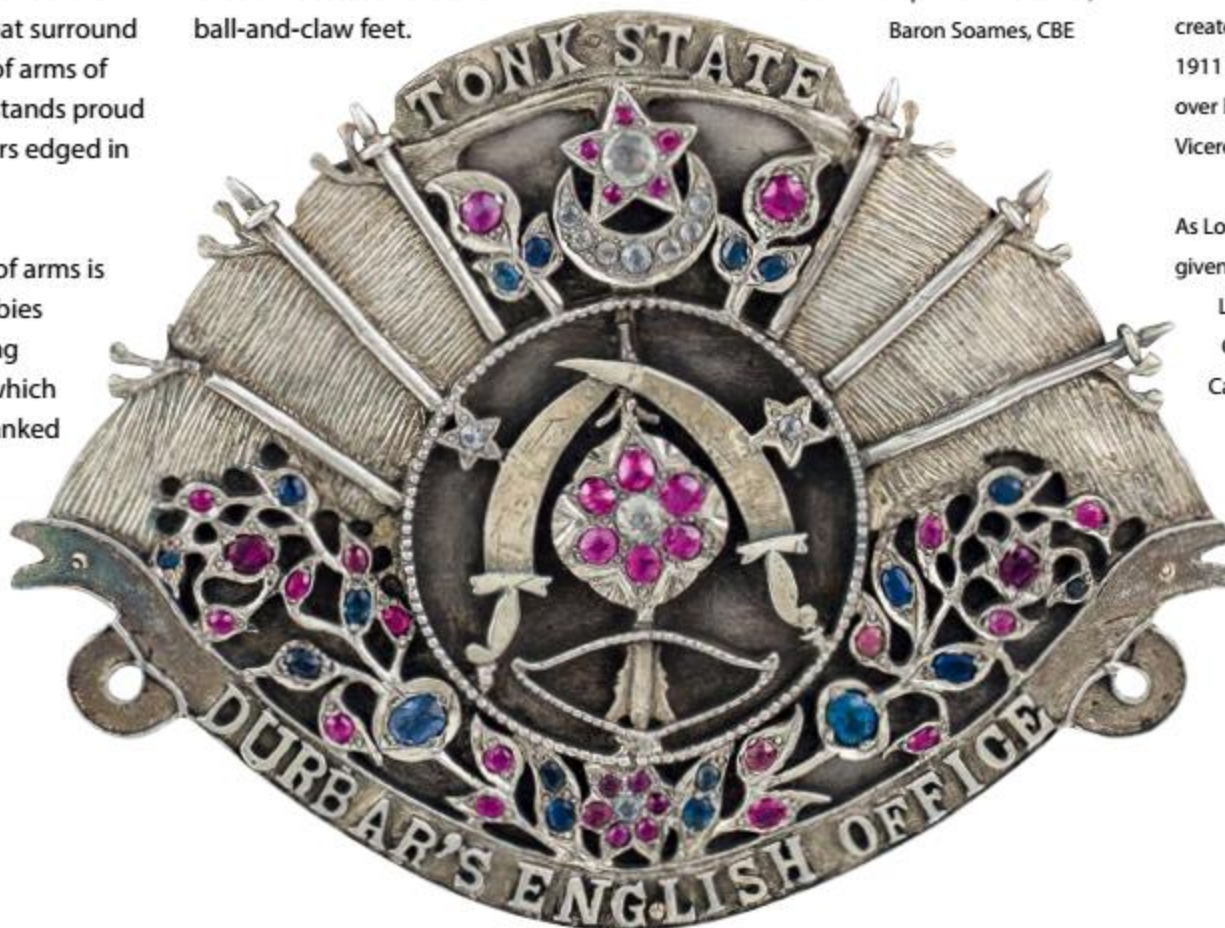
Arthur Christopher John Soames,  
Baron Soames, CBE

(1920-1987), was a British politician, a member of the Conservative Party, the last Governor of Southern Rhodesia and son-in-law of Winston Churchill. He married Churchill's youngest daughter Mary Spencer-Churchill in 1947. It was during military service during the Second World War that he rose to Captain. He was created a life peer in 1978.

Lord Soames was the son of Captain Arthur Granville Soames, OBE (1886-1962), a member of HM's Coldstream Guards, and brother of Olave Baden-Powell, World Chief Guide. Arthur Granville Soames inherited the mansion and estate of Sheffield Park, Sussex, the address on the label, from his father's childless brother, Arthur Gilstrap Soames, and sold the estate in 1953.

Charles Hardinge, 1st Baron Hardinge of Penshurst, KG, GCB, GCSI, GCMG, GCIE, GCVO, ISO, PC, DL (1858-1944) was a diplomat and statesman who served as Viceroy and Governor-General of India from 1910 to 1916. During his tenure of office the only Delhi Durbar attended by a King-Emperor and consort happened in 1911 with King George V and Queen Mary in attendance. Tonk, in Rajasthan, was a small Princely State under the British Raj with scattered pockets of territory. At the time the ruler was Nawab Sir Muhammad Ibrahim Ali Khan, GCIE. It is tempting to suggest that our casket was created for the momentous occasion of the 1911 Delhi Durbar, a grand occasion presided over by Lord Hardinge during his tenure as Viceroy and Governor-General.

As Lord Hardinge died in 1944 he must have given the casket before this date to the young Lord Soames when he was still styled Captain Christopher Soames. Captain Soames will have written the note on his wife's label only after 1947, the year he married Mary, and thus refers to the late Lord Hardinge and adds the touching "As a memento".

























## MUGHAL VELVET

INDIA (MUGHAL), 17TH CENTURY

LENGTH: 192 CM

WIDTH: 104 CM

A cut-and-uncut voided silk velvet on a buff ground with a central field of red ogival floral cartouches each containing a radiating quatrefoil medallion, surrounded by a border of naturalistic floral sprays spaced by smaller flowers growing from mounds of leaves and grass that delicately float in-between. Surrounding the central field as well as the outer border are narrow dark mauve bands framed by distinctive yellow margins that add a piquant colour accent. The sandy ground of the main field, against which the ogivals form their diaper pattern, is darker than the pale buff ground of the outer border, thus enhancing the contrast between the two sections. The colour range of the velvet pile is wide but modulated with great subtlety so that the colours work together harmoniously.

This small and elegant velvet would probably have been used as a floor spread. In the Victoria and Albert Museum in London is a mid seventeenth century velvet border of similar design from a larger floor spread. This is illustrated in John Guy and Deborah Swallow (eds.), *Arts of India: 1550-1900*, 1990, p. 96, no. 77 (acc. no. 320a-1898).

Floral sprays of two different designs alternate in the composition of the outer border of the present velvet. The first is clearly a lily plant with pointed petals enclosing the characteristic stamens. The second five-petalled flower type is less distinct in species but may be derived from a poppy, though its sharp calyx also resembles that of a carnation. Mughal flowers were often composite or stylised, despite their air of great naturalism. Both plants have serrated green leaves with veins detailed by the empty ground skilfully cut in reserve. The small sprays that float in-between are a variant of the larger lily. The creamy yellow colour of the flower petals is optically altered by the outlines which are mostly in red

but there are some green outlines at a lower level within the mounds of leaves. This produces the impression of two shades of yellow whereas it is the same yellow visually modified by its surround. The serrated leaves have a turquoise tinge that appears when the emerald pile is viewed from different angles, so as the viewer walks around the carpet the colours shift before the eyes. Similarly, the red ogivals in the central field are accented by dots of turquoise that darken to green when viewed from another angle. Flashes of white velvet pile sparkle in the interstices of the linked ogivals.

The plants of the border lean to the right while their flowers nod to the left, giving a sinuous windswept feeling to the whole ensemble. The style of flowering plants depicted in profile and formally arranged in rows against a plain ground is characteristic of what Daniel Walker calls the classic Mughal "flower style".<sup>1</sup> The place of the small plants floating between and above the larger sprays in our velvet is often taken by wispy *chinoiserie* cloud bands that scuttle across the sky on other textiles.

The "flower style" was the key development in artistic decoration of all media - carpets, textiles, architecture, manuscript margins, book bindings, jade, glass, wood and ivory - that appeared in its fully developed form during the reign of the emperor Shah Jahan (1628-1658).<sup>2</sup> The new "flower style" featured naturalistic flowering plants depicted in profile against a plain background or formally arranged in rows.<sup>3</sup> The elegantly spacious designs, as seen on this velvet, were followed by more elaborate patterns combining various flowering plants, vines and blossoms within a lattice or trellis.<sup>4</sup>

It is the heightened naturalism of the flowers and leaves, in combination with their contrasting formality of presentation that distinguishes the "flower style" from earlier styles in Indian art and decoration. It represents, in fact, a purely Mughal aesthetic quite

different from anything seen in earlier Indian art and may be regarded as the epitome of Mughal decoration. The "flower style" was a local style developed through the seventeenth century by Mughal court artists, and is distinct from the earlier Persian style vine-scroll patterns with its semi-naturalistic flowers and leaves.<sup>5</sup>

According to Walker, though the "flower style" reached its perfect and most characteristic expression during the reign of Shah Jahan, it did not emerge suddenly, nor was it originated by Shah Jahan's court artists. Floral blossoms and whole plants were commonly represented in Mughal art during the reigns of both Akbar and Jahangir, but the representations were not especially naturalistic, nor were they formally arranged. Plants were also treated as secondary decorative elements and were not the primary focus or subject of the decoration.<sup>6</sup> It is important to note that two of the most significant artistic projects of Jahangir's reign, the great album compiled between 1599 and 1618, and the tomb of I'timad ud-Daula, completed in 1628, are classic examples of the Persian style in India. Walker argues that the absence of formally arranged flowering plants on these two imperial productions signifies that the "flower style" had not yet become part of the standard decorative vocabulary.<sup>7</sup> However, the origin of the style can in fact be linked to the

reign of Jahangir, and a key event in its development is the famous visit of Jahangir to Kashmir in March 1620.

It had long been an ambition of Jahangir's to visit Kashmir in springtime. He was enraptured by the beauty and abundance of the flowers and plants that he saw. Jahangir had great powers of observation and he eloquently describes the flora of Kashmir in appreciative detail in his *Memoirs*, the *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*.<sup>8</sup> He asked his most accomplished court painter of natural history, the great Mansur, to prepare more than a hundred paintings of flowers, of which only three survive.<sup>9</sup>

In Mansur's sharply observed and botanically accurate "flower portraits" lies the genesis of the "flower style". They combine a heightened indigenous naturalism with the formal pose, relatively plain background and hovering butterfly or other insect characteristic of the European herbalist style. The Mughal court collected European herbal drawings and prints, and copies of European engravings have appeared in Mughal albums of miniatures.<sup>10</sup> However, the representational style developed by Mansur in his flower "portraits" was not adapted to general decorative use until the reign of Shah Jahan. The "flower style" first appears as a painted architectural decoration in the *Padshahnama*, the chronicle of Shah Jahan's reign, beginning about 1630, in a painting by Bichitr.<sup>11</sup> The "flower style" appears in its fully developed form, in rows, in carved marble dado reliefs in the Shah Burj (Royal Tower) at Agra Fort, a structure completed in 1637.<sup>12</sup> The *pietra dura* panels in the Hall of Private Audience at the Red Fort in Delhi, dating to between 1639 and 1648, are inlaid with naturalistic plants flanked by similar *chinoiserie* cloud bands.<sup>13</sup> It is by comparison with these and other examples in various media that we can confidently date this velvet to the seventeenth century.

A hanging of cut and voided silk velvet with metal-wrapped thread in the Metropolitan Museum of





Art, New York, is published by Walker in his article, "Mughal Silks: The Metropolitan Museum Collection", in *Woven Splendours: Indian Silks, Marg*, vol. XLVI no. 3, 1995, p. 55, fig. 5. This velvet (Rogers Fund, acc. no. 1930.30.18), dating to the mid seventeenth century, has a similar design of two repeated and alternating plants spaced by floating cloud bands, but with staggered rows of plants. In the same article Walker illustrates other silks, carpets, *patkas* and wall hangings decorated in the spare, elegant manner of the seventeenth century "flower style".

In the Spink catalogue *Eye of the Courtier*, November 1999, pp. 112-115, cat. no. 64, is illustrated a large velvet border in the same "flower style" with leaning floral sprays. The Victoria and Albert Museum border also has alternating flowering plants spaced by cloud bands on a plain ground but the plants are not depicted on an incline but upright.

A velvet fragment in the Collection A.E.D.T.A., Paris, decorated with naturalistic, formally organised, upright flowering plants spaced by cloud bands, is published in Krishnâ Riboud, Amina Okada and Marie-Helen Guelton, *Le Motif Floral dans les Tissus Moghols: Inde XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*, 1996, pl. 14.

Provenance:

Baron Edmond de Rothschild  
Colnaghi  
Michael Goedhuis

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1. Daniel Walker, *Flowers Underfoot: Indian Carpets of the Mughal Era*, 1997, pp. 86-87.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
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9. Ibid. Walker illustrates Mansur's painting of "An Iris Plant and Butterfly", from the Dara Shikoh Album, circa 1635, on p. 87, fig. 82.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., p. 16, fig. 3.
12. Ibid., p. 88, fig. 83.
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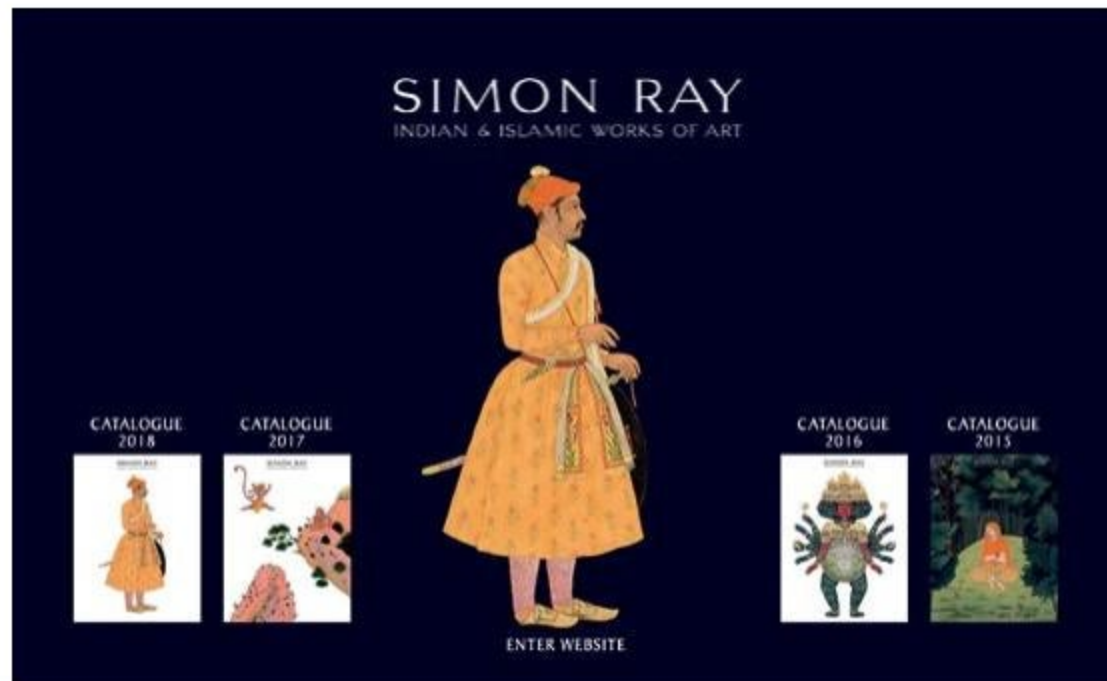
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